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Among the week's contributors

The consolations of omniscience

Richard Shannon

HARRIET MARTINEAU

Autobiography

Vol 1: 441pp. 0 86068 425 3

Vol 2: 510pp. 0 86068 430 X

Virago. £4.95 each.

'A little dead woman at Norwich' was what Brougham patronizingly called her to the early days of her vastly successful series of *Illustrations of Political Economy*. He lived to regret his temerity. John Stuart Mill, angered at her gossipy denigration of Harriet Taylor, thought her a 'cantankerous and opinionated creature', exactly the type of sectarian radical whose hard core of narrowness he was trying to puncture. Charles Dickens, confronted with the phenomenon of Miss Martineau as spokesperson for the National Association of Manufacturers, concluded: 'I do not suppose there was ever such a wrong-headed woman born - such a vain one or such a humbug.' There is certainly more than a touch of her in Mrs Jellyby and more than a hint of her in Mrs Pardiggle, 'a School lady, a Visiting lady, a Reading lady, a Distributing lady, a Social Linen Box Committee'. It does not appear that Miss Martineau ever suspected her contributions to these fictional personae. She persisted in her view of Dickens as a 'virtuous and happy family man' whose 'glowing and generous heart' was 'kept steady by the best domestic influences' (so different from Thackeray: 'The first drawback in his books, as in his manners, is the impression conveyed by both that he never can know a good and sensible woman'), but she deplored Dickens' 'vigorous error-prone'ness about matters of science, as shown to 'Oliver Twist' about the new poor-law... and in 'Hard Times' about the controversies of employment.

'Matters of science' were Miss Martineau's forte and, even more decisively than was the case with Dr Whewell, omniscience was her forte. She bequeathed her skull and brain to aid archaeological research. She had two casts of her head taken, one in 1833, the other in 1853, 'to verify the changes made by time' and to ensure that the chances of her drowning at sea or being smashed up in a railway accident (this contingency was much in her mind as it was with Queen

Victoria) should not deny science so signal an advantage. She rejoiced to live in a time when the mists of ignorance were being dissipated by the 'metaphysical stage of mind' being emancipated from the 'debts of the theological' and tending towards 'final release' in the glow of science. She regretted only that her age was but 'an infant one in the history of our globe and of Man' and consequently a 'great waste in the years and the powers of the wisest of us'; and that since there was no God and no afterlife, she could not share in mankind's ultimate perfection. (It was the writer and wit Douglas Jerrold's quip that 'There is no God and Harriet Martineau is His prophet'.)

Still, consolations were many. They were, it is true, very largely of the kind derived from temperamental self-assurance and self-sufficiency. She condemned Christianity as a mythology which 'fails to make happy, fails to make good, fails to make wise'. Of her own ultimate happiness, goodness and wisdom Miss Martineau leaves her readers in no doubt:

my last days are cheered by the sense of how much better my later years have been than the earlier; or than, in the earlier, I ever can have anticipated. Some of the terrible faults of my character which religion failed to ameliorate, and others which superstition bred in me, have given way, more or less, since I attained a truer point of view; and the relief from old burdens, the uprising of new satisfactions, and the opening of new clearness... has been as favourable to my moral nature as to intellectual progress and general enjoyment.

Moreover, she had the satisfaction of calculating that she had earned by literature somewhere about £10,000 without the 'pain of the slightest deflection from my own convictions, or the most trifling restraint on my freedom of thought and speech'. Her production was voluminous: the political economy *Illustrations*, the *Poor Law and Paupers Illustrated*, *Illustrations of Taxation*, and her one novel, *Deerbrook* (also reprinted by Virago, 523 pp. £3.95, 0 86068 349 4), to the 1830s. (There were widespread regrets that she wrote so more novels, for she was held a worthy successor of Miss Austen and a promising forerunner of the Miss Brookes and Miss Mary Ann Evans.) There were very few books on her American travels, on



Harriet Martineau

the world the benefit of her experience in successful life management. In three months of 1855 she produced three substantial volumes in a manner wholly characteristic. The writing is fluent, brimful of incident and opinion, written at speed but without haste and without need of revision or second thoughts. As she explained the 'joyous labours' of her method: 'It has been a leading pleasure and satisfaction of mine... to compass some one department of knowledge at a time, so as to feel a real command of it, succeeding to a misty ignorance.' Miss Martineau had second thoughts only

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over very long timespans. She never entertained doubts or perplexities over any job immediately at hand.

About impending death, however, Miss Martineau miscalculated. She lived on another twenty years, as busy, combated, dogmatically opinionated, mettlesome and meddlesome as ever. The *Autobiography* had to await posthumous publication in 1877. Indeed Miss Martineau was something of a specialist in invalidism. She had earlier spent five years prostrate on sofas in Tynemouth before 'obedience to a newly discovered law of nature raised me up, and sent me forth into the world again'. In 1840. This new law of nature was her entire conviction of the 'truth of the insight of somnambulism'.

The disposition of the present time, no doubt, would be to diagnose Miss Martineau as a hysteric. And certainly materials for such a diagnosis lie in rich profusion throughout this text. She started as a pious Norwich Unitarian oppressed by the disabilities of plumpness, shyness, deafness and an abiding sense of grudge at being insufficiently loved. There was, briefly, a fiancé who went insane. The love of her life was, equally tragically, her younger brother James, the Unitarian luminary. 'All who have ever known me', as Miss Martineau confided with the candid innocence of her era, 'were aware that the strongest passion I have ever entertained was in regard to my youngest brother, who has certainly filled the largest space in the life of my affection of any person whatsoever. The friendship which was "the great privilege of the concluding period of my life" was with the very odd Henry George Atkinson, whose discovery it was to locate the phrenological centres of control by making mesmerized subjects describe their own brains. Miss Martineau had a way of being of the centre of public storms on questions of covert sexuality. She centred immense scandal by propagating the doctrines of the Rev Mr Malthus on the need for prudential progenitiveness. (Her deafness and Mr Malthus's cleft palate caused problems, much as did Wordsworth's habit of leaving out his teeth when not in general company of an evening.) Her hostility to slavery in the United States led to her being identified as an advocate of miscegenation, or 'amalgamationism'; another great scandal of public utility.

It is tempting to see in Miss

Roman Britain from the Air

S. S. FRERE and J. K. S. ST JOSEPH

Over a hundred and forty aerial photographs are included in this book, showing the military and civilian remains of Roman occupation, together with detailed commentary on individual sites and a discussion of their nature and significance.

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Cambridge Air Surveys (published 7 July)

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Martineau's obsessive quest for intellectual certainty a case of psychic over-compensation. Like many lapsed Unitarians, she abandoned a relaxed supernatural creed for a rigid form of secularized Calvinism. Priestley's edition of Hartley was her primer — "that which gives the philosophy of Association, cleared from the imbecillity of the Vibration theory". Necessarianism became the philosophical fuel of her energies. "The indolent dreamers whom I happen to know are those who find excuse for their idleness in the doctrine of free-will" (probably she had Hartley Coleridge in mind when she wrote that). "True Necessarians must be the most diligent and confident of all workers". The intensity of her devotion to whoever was her reigning guru of the hour went beyond the call of intellectual duty. Her writing about Comte, the last and greatest of the masters who led her to the "grand truth that social affairs proceed according to great general laws, no less than natural phenomena of every kind", exudes distinct sexual overtones. Rather like a nun, or an abbess or mother superior of

a fort of secularist nunnery, she worshipped the "imagery of the glorious hierarchy of the Sciences" which Comte had exhibited. In her diaries she found "strong expressions of rapture" about her task of translating him. "Many a passage of my version did I write with tears falling into my lap; and many a time did I feel almost stifled for want of the presence of some genial disciple of my instructor, to whom I might speak of his achievement, with some chance of being understood."

It must be said that the rather exiguous introduction provided by Gaby Weiner for this Virago edition offers no thought or guidance on these matters. Presumably they would not be considered appropriate for the purposes of the present publication, which are feminist and celebratory. Whether Miss Martineau is likely to be a help or a hindrance to present-day feminism is indeed a moot point. Certainly she stood up for the claims and rights of women. But at the same time she offers herself snugly as almost a caricature of the sectarian fanatic whose head is stuffed full of the very

best intellectual rubbish currently in vogue. And she disposed of that "poor victim of passion", Mary Wollstonecraft, with brisk impatience. "I never could reconcile my mind to [her] writings, or to whatever I heard of her. It seemed to me, from the earliest times when I could think on the subject of Woman's Rights and condition, that the first requisite of advancement is the self-reliance which results from self-discipline. The great need was to be 'rational and dispassionate'." The advocacy of such as Wollstonecraft becomes "mere detritment, precisely in proportion to their personal reasons for unhappiness, unless they have fortitude enough (which I hold complainants usually have not) to get their own troubles under their feet."

There can be no doubt about Miss Martineau's fortitude; which she had the pleasure of combining with loud complaint. One of her favourite phrases is about giving out "a bit of my mind". People — and indeed whole nations, as in the case of the Americans — tended to find themselves painfully bruised by her singularity. She kept her hatreds in good repair. "I have seen a

good deal of life and many varieties of manners; and it now appears to me that the broadest vulgarities I have encountered are in the families of official Whigs, who conceive themselves the cream of society, and the light and rulers of the world of our empire." There was of course the contemptible Brougham, who betrayed good Lord Durham; and there was the fraudulent Macaulay: "His review strifes, and especially the one on Bacon, ought to have abolished all confidence in his honesty, as well as in his capacity for philosophy." She rehearsed in loving detail her old grievances against Lockhart, Sterling and Thomas Moore (the "three persons only to whom I have refused to be introduced" — Miss Martineau was invariably precise in such matters); and *The Times* remained along with them in her limbo of the unforgiven. She had her favourites: she was sure that Carlyle had done for morality what Wordsworth had done for poetry. She came to approve of her fellow-worshipper at the Positivist shrine, Miss Evans ("George Eliot"). She judged Monckton Milnes's poems

"wonderfully beautiful in their way". She tended to write more vitriol about her dislikes than her likes. This was more than anything else makes her autobiography readable. She was a formidable woman who made her way in a man's world, insistently protesting all the way her disabilities of health and strength ("So, I set to work with dry eyes, and a quivering brain", sustained by inhalations of salt volatile administered alternately by mother and maid) and the unflinching purity of her motives ("My own innocence of intention, and my refusal to consent what I thought and meant, carried me through...").

Is Harriet Martineau, in the end, worth the trouble of a new edition? As a case study in intellectual limitations she is a two-edged weapon for feminism. She would be applied to learn that such respectability as she might have now stems exclusively from that angle. Her proudest boast was to adopt as her motto her Ambleside neighbour "Wordsworth's command: 'Come Light visit me!' Her great problem was not so much a physical one as the ease as a critical dimness of the eye.

When Gilbert assumed the mantle of the late Randolph S. Churchill, whom he had assisted in the preparation of the first two volumes, he inherited a format that he has since faithfully maintained. The "theme of the work", as promulgated at the very outset, was

"the first time was when Benjamin Haydon committed suicide, and Miss Mitford's talk about his correspondence with Elizabeth Barrett Barrett led to disturbing talk; the second came when Miss Mitford published details about Edward's death in her discussion of Elizabeth Barrett Browning in her *Recollections of a Literary Life*. The letter to Miss Mitford in which Elizabeth Barrett Browning remonstrates and forgives is a model of candour, dignity, and affection."

A prominent feature in this exchange is implicit and explicit feminist concern. Elizabeth Barrett Barrett compares herself — to

the limitations of the friendship and the correspondence become apparent. Even the conventionally high style of affection cannot co-exist with the language of love: a detail, like the discontinued use of "Your Own" and the return to the "Yours affectionately" with which the correspondence had begun, shows a scrupulous sense of emotional propriety. It was not for nothing that the dog Flush — Miss Mitford's present — but Robert Browning. The arrival of Browning not only compelled Elizabeth Barrett Barrett to revise her sense of intimacy, but supplanted fragmentary talk by a sustained colloquy about people and poetry. Early on, Elizabeth Barrett Barrett sometimes marvels at her affinity with Miss Mitford, but not after the discovery of a better affinity. She even tells Browning that she and Miss Mitford are "strangers" and later speaks of their incompatibility. When she gets the first letter from Robert, and later when they meet for the first time, she writes a letter to Miss Mitford saying nothing about him, and then another giving the news briefly, asking casually whether she has already mentioned it. The imagery of the seasons is borrowed from the letters of friendship by the love-letters and then restored with intensity and ambiguity. On March 25, 1845, she writes to Miss Mitford that she admits "the spring is alive to hope again", says her "heart is not however in a calm yet — it must have time I suppose, and tells how she is building her "nest in a green tree". Five days earlier the imagery of seasons appears in a letter to Robert: "April is coming. There will be a May and a June if we live to see such things. A week or so after she received the first Browning letters, in January, she recurs to their old disagreement about his poetry: "My opinion is that Browning's name will stand, when the spring comes", says Miss Mitford was right to speak of Browning "stealing" her friend.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning admitted the impulsive spontaneity of her letter-writing, comparing her pen with "that bewitched broom in the story, which, being sent to draw water, drew luck; after that, until the whole house was in flood". Miss Mitford not only compared her friend's letters to those of Madame de Sévigné and Cowper put together, but summed up the correspondence as "really talk, freer talk, neither better nor worse, assuming a form of permanence — gossip, daguerotypes". The shared gossip is the excited indulgence of two unmarried women, curiously speculating on love and marriage. It continued after the Browning marriage, often exchanging physical details of miscarriages and motherhood for "kisses of ageing", all gossiped, however, "inmate-sounding", but not necessarily candid in confession, and the correspondence with Miss Mitford has its reservations. The crisis of Edward's death is described in full to Robert, not to Miss Mitford, and Robert rightly took the revelation as an advance in their intimacy. The Browning suffered on two occasions from Miss Mitford's village idiosyncrasies.



Mary Russell Mitford

Browning — with one of Richardson's scribbling heroines and the isolated correspondence of two women, like that in *Clarissa Harlowe*, brings out the vulnerability and the solidarity of women. In Victorian society, too, fathers and brothers could be as destructive as seducers. If Elizabeth Barrett Barrett is a descendant of *Clarissa* (meeting with a happier fate) Edward Moulton Barrett, senior, and Miss Mitford's selfish, spendthrift father, are descendants of Mr Harlowe. The horrors of filial love and "submission" are doubled and generalized. This subject of women's disadvantage, addressed by the letters of friendship and not by the love-letters, is not mentioned in the editors' special pleading. Elizabeth Barrett Barrett's strengths were elicited and developed by the relation with Robert Browning, but her explicit discussion of women's capacity is deprecatory. She tells Browning (as she had indeed told Miss Mitford) that she believes women's intellectual capacity is quick, but inferior in power, speaking like some of the superior and inferior men in *The Mill on the Floss*.

Yet there are many occasions when she speaks revealingly to Miss Mitford of "the authority" world of men in which they are enslaved and imprisoned. When the *Lancelot* is introduced, that Harriet Martineau's therapeutic mesmerism had sexual implications. Elizabeth Barrett Browning indignantly pointed out that the journal ignored the important fact that the hypnotist was a woman.

The battle begins

Stephen Koss

MARTIN GILBERT

Finest Hour: The biography of Winston S. Churchill 1939-1941

1308pp. Heinemann. £20 (paperback, £15.95). 0 34 29187 0

Like the mighty Mississippi, an apt image in more ways than one, the official biography of Sir Winston Churchill rolls on. In a sixth massive volume, Martin Gilbert carries the story from September 1939, when Chamberlain's Britain declared war on Hitler's Germany, into December 1941, when Roosevelt's America entered the struggle, now enlarged to global proportions. Not surprisingly, this is the most satisfying instalment thus far. Churchill, who previously was compelled largely to react to events, at last lowers majestically over them.

When Gilbert assumed the mantle of the late Randolph S. Churchill, whom he had assisted in the preparation of the first two volumes, he inherited a format that he has since faithfully maintained. The "theme of the work", as promulgated at the very outset, was

Focusing on the Führer

J. D. Noakes

IAN KERSHAW

Der Hitler-Mythos: Volksmeinung und Propaganda im Dritten Reich 215pp. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags Anstalt. 3 421 01985 1

Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933-1945. 425pp. Oxford University Press. £22.50. 0 19 821922 9

The popular image of German society under Nazi rule is confusing: on the one hand the Führer surrounded by adoring crowds; on the other, the Nazi regime and the concentration camps — together with Stalin's Russia, the archetype of a modern régime of terror. It is a picture which raises questions crucial to our understanding of Nazism and perhaps of modern totalitarianism generally. What were the respective roles of consent and coercion in sustaining the régime and what was the nature of that consent? How much dissent existed behind the façade of national unity and was it terror alone that rendered it so ineffective?

Surprisingly, this is a question which has long been neglected. Not until 1966 did a book appear which advanced our understanding much beyond the works published before 1945. In part, this delay was a consequence of a rather simplistic theory of totalitarianism which dominated the 1950s: Nazi Germany was seen as a "totalitarian" society in which the population had been "atomized" and "mobilized" through a ubiquitous system of terror and sophisticated propaganda apparatus. The Germans had been simultaneously terrorized into submission by the Gestapo and brainwashed through ideological indoctrination. Scholars studied the laws and the decrees, the propaganda directives and the publications and assumed that their goals had been achieved. They tended to take the appearance for the reality. The Nazis themselves claimed to have created a "national community" in which all those traditional cleavages hitherto dividing the nation — divisions based on class, religion, regional loyalties and so on — had been overcome in a common membership of, and service to, the nation and its leader. Scholars of the totalitarian school tended to accept a kind of negative version of this claim, in which the German people had been reduced to an anonymous mass of isolated individuals.

In 1966 David Schoenbaum's brilliant, richly suggestive study, *Hitler's People*, was published. It was a landmark in the history of the study of the Nazi regime. It was a landmark in the history of the study of the Nazi regime. It was a landmark in the history of the study of the Nazi regime.

encapsulated in Lockhart's dictum: "He shall be his own biographer." That implies a certain illogicality as well as a degree of self-conscious inhibition. Living men may write autobiographies, not biographies of themselves. Dead men can do neither.

Because Gilbert is manifestly capable of greater detachment than his predecessor, and especially because he has elsewhere demonstrated his powers of perception and persuasion, one wishes that he had seen fit to intervene more emphatically between Churchill and the emotive issues of his career. Controversies are delineated, but seldom evaluated. Instead, the author provides a day-by-day, sometimes hour-by-hour chronology. The sources, skillfully assembled, are expected — and indeed required — to speak for themselves. With regard to the fall of France, for example, they do so eloquently. Often, however, they echo, contradict, or speak past each other. The effect, curiously enough, is to dissipate the dramatic tension.

The reader, unassisted, may find it difficult to reach conclusions. Churchill's advent to the premiership seems almost an anticlimax. To what extent were the Taps and Tadpoles (as Harold Nicolson called them) right in assigning him paramount res-

ponsibility for the Norwegian fiasco? What could have induced Churchill, who equated the "barbarisms of Nazism and Bolshevism", to instruct Sir Stafford Cripps "a lunatic in a country of lunatics" to warn Stalin of impending German duplicity? What were the merits of the countervailing strategies advanced by Sir Dudley Pound and others? Was Wavell, replaced by Auchinleck, victimized as he believed? What, in fact, were Churchill's true sentiments towards Chamberlain, to whom he paid a moving memorial tribute, only to remark to his secretary that "of course I could have done it the other way around"? What considerations delayed Churchill's appointment as Conservative Party leader, and just how realistic were his military and naval blueprints? Churchill, as his own biographer, cannot be the judge. Nor, for that matter, would he have wanted to be. His controversial decision to bombard the French navy in July 1940 was left "to the world and to history" for justification.

What does emerge, clearly and unequivocally, is the man's indomitable spirit. Convinced that "all will come right", a slogan he awkwardly appropriated from a defeated Boer adversary, he never faltered in his resolve. It was not enough that his wife

stalked out of St Martin-in-the-Fields, where a "pacifist" sermon was being preached; he "ought to have cried 'Shame, desecrating the house of God with lies'". Churchill, who peppered his private dispatches as well as his speeches with Biblical references, chose his text from the Book of Maccabees: "Arm yourselves, and be ye men of valour, and be in readiness for the conflict; for it is better for us to perish in battle than to look upon the outrage of our nation and our altar."

No less amazing than his courage was his unflinching energy, or least in these early war years. "Churchill's 'aphere' was whatever he could see, sense or remember: it was everything he heard and everything that was on his

mind." In the midst of crisis, he found time to work on his *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, to sit reluctantly for a Cecil Beaton portrait, and to study newspaper comment. Martin Gilbert presents a vivid picture of Churchill's daily routine, taking pains to minimize (on the authority of Sir John Colville and contrary to other evidence) the quantity of Churchill's consumption of alcohol. Best of all, he unravels Churchill's complicated negotiations with Washington, awarding full credit to Arthur Purvis, who gave his life for that cause.

The welter of information, at times more overwhelming than instructive, might have been alleviated by fewer and shorter extracts from published works, particularly Churchill's own retrospective accounts. Likewise, certain letters of congratulation and commendation might have been consigned to the "companion" volumes, where the extensive memoranda will presumably be reproduced. If Churchill had a particular fault, ventured Colonel (later Lieutenant-General Sir) Ian Jacob, "it was to go too much into detail". With due respect, the same must be said about his official biographer, whose achievement awaits proper appraisal at its conclusion.

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of the chaos and opacity of the decision-making processes within the régime. Kershaw's second book, on popular opinion in Bavaria, concentrates on the nature of dissent in the Third Reich. Bavaria was selected primarily because the sources there are particularly favourable. Unlike other areas it has complete runs of police reports, from the local *Schutzmannschaft* up through district headquarters to the state level covering virtually the whole period. Admittedly, Bavaria was in two important respects untypical of Germany as a whole: it was predominantly rural and predominantly Catholic. Nevertheless, on balance I think the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

The book sets out to provide "an empirical study of the political mentality and attitudes of ordinary Germans in Bavaria", of how they reacted to change instigated by Nazi policy and ideology. In particular, it aims to explore the extent to which Nazism was able to transform social and political values. Kershaw stresses dissent as "the voicing of attitudes, frequently spontaneous, which in any way whatsoever ran counter to or were critical of Nazism". He examines it through three central aspects: the differing response of peasantry, working class and petty bourgeoisie; the effect of conflicts between church and state on the church-going population, and the extent to which religious values could withstand Nazi assault; and finally, the impact of antisemitism on popular opinion.

Kershaw's conclusions challenge previous interpretations. First, he demonstrates that "beneath the apparent unity of the 'national community' which so impressed contemporaries, the Third Reich was a remarkably disunited society. Old tensions, particularly those of class, continued and were to some extent exacerbated by Nazi policies. Second, he argues that society — in Bavaria at any rate — was not "atomized", that class and religious loyalties remained largely intact. Third, following on from that, he questions whether people's sense of status, their interpretation of their social position, changed very much. He concludes that "material conditions directly affecting the everyday lives of the population provided the most continuous and usually the most dominant influence upon the formation of political opinion", often involving an acute sense of social injustice; but that "the deepest antagonisms and the sharpest forms of dissent and popular opposition were in relation to religious questions".

The book contains many examples of discontent and criticism of the régime. Much of this, as Kershaw points out, was simply traditional grumbling about such things as prices and shortages which are common in any society. Under the Third Reich, however, any criticism was construed as hostile to the régime, so that it was automatically politicized. Why then did this widespread discontent fail to pose a serious threat? Nazi Germany was after all brought down by internal intervention not by external subversion. Part of the answer was terror, which, during the war years, increased in intensity parallel to the growth of discontent. But just as important was the fact that for most people discontent was only partial. While the middle class grumbled about material difficulties, they could identify with many of the values of the régime — its nationalism, its emphasis on "law and order", and its hostility to the Left. Even the workers — the least integrated section — welcomed the restoration of full employment; and virtually all groups respected Hitler, the very embodiment of the régime.

One crucial issue omitted from this book is the attitudes of youth. It has often been argued that the Nazis had considerable success in winning over youth, in exploiting generation conflict at home and at school, and replacing traditional values. It has recently been suggested, for example, that the destruction of the Social Democratic Trade Union subculture among the working class created a vacuum which encouraged young working people to move away from traditional patterns of class solidarity towards a more individualistic, achievement-oriented ethic, preparing the way for the *Wirtschaftswunder* culture of the 1950s. Here there may be something in the Dahrendorf thesis. Kershaw's sources also do not permit much differentiation between categories within social groups — for example between skilled and unskilled labour. What is clearly now needed is a number of studies of particular plants, villages, urban communities — new towns such as the Volkswagen city of Wolfsburg — using the recent *Alltagsgeschichte* approach of oral history to see how far the Nazis merely exploited social trends, the cult of sport for example, which were already under way in the 1920s.

In the meantime, Dr Kershaw has greatly increased our understanding of the German people's attitudes and behaviour under Nazi rule, and of the roots of consent and dissent. His two books are fine examples of the best British historical scholarship: lucid and refreshingly free from jargon, rich in fascinating new material, perceptive in analysis, balanced in judgment, and humane in spirit.

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Ruling, regulating and ravaging

G. R. Elton

E. W. Ives

The Common Lawyers of Pre-Reformation England: Thomas Kebell, A Case Study
536pp. Cambridge University Press
£40.
0 521 24011 5

Occasionally there appears a book of history which under the outward appearance of innocent learning conceals a time-bomb. On the face of it, E. W. Ives has written a very full and very long account of the lives and practices of lawyers in England in the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Distilling a quarter-century's work on the sources and asking all the possible questions, he has answered more than one might have thought answerable. To cite its parts, the book covers the legal profession, practice in the courts, lawyers and the law, and the interaction of the profession with society; and in all respects very fully. No summary can do justice to the wealth of information conveyed in *The Common Lawyers of Pre-Reformation England*, but a few points of special significance may be listed.

The lawyers of the age formed a fully developed profession, interlocking with each other and dominated by the small group of serjeants-at-law and the judges chosen from among them. Though much conventional abuse condemned them as greedy caterpillars on the common weal, their services were indispensable and their rewards, though notable, far from excessive. Some complaints to the contrary notwithstanding, they did not promote litigation for corrupt reasons, but laboured to satisfy the litigious demands of the generality (of both sexes). Their training was both careful and efficient, but the law they served lacked rigour and could be freely new-made in the intimate discussions held at moots, in consultations, and even during trials, as those well-acquainted men at the top argued about the many knotty issues which, despite the apparent formality of the law, remained unsettled. Though the law aimed to protect all legitimate interests it served in the first place its original fount, the King: the crown, and by the 1530s something to be called the state, obtained from it not only advantage but also a dynamic capacity to assert authority, though in turn state action was expected to observe the limitations set by legality.

Though a profession, lawyers by no means formed a caste. Almost always they came from the landed classes and invested their money in land; their descendants very often abandoned the law and disappeared into the gentry. Dr Ives seems to agree with Erasmus that in England noble families sprang from the practice of the law, but I cannot think of many families for which this is true: middling and upper gentry so sprang more commonly. Down to about 1540, the profession (with some assistance from the Church) supplied the men who ran not only the law, accountancy and estate management but also the government of the realm; both these professions changed course towards professional specialization in the early Reformation. Ives argues that Thomas More and Thomas Cromwell belonged to the last generation of great lawyer-administrators who were to be succeeded by men trained at court and in the universities. A humanist education, diplomatic experience, and service in the departments and in parliament began to replace the life of the law as proving-grounds for the rulers of the state, with the lawyers retreating to the specific practice of their calling. There is a good deal in this case though it seems to me a trifle overstated; especially because they nearly always supplied the post-Reformation lord chancellor, lawyers (and especially the judges and law officers) continued to play a major role in politics and government. What did decline was the role of the great serjeants. However, despite these reservations, it is clear that Ives has put his finger on a truly striking transformation in the structure of the state's service.

Two things have made his detailed, often intimate, analysis possible – a man and a source. As the book's subtitle indicates, the law and lawyers of the age are tracked in part through the diaries and fortunes of one of them, Thomas Kebell, serjeant-at-law, an exceptionally well-documented in his personal and professional affairs. Though the reader may want to skip some of the massive detail concerning his properties or the pernickety pursuit of his (rapidly declining) descendants as they all trod the paths of "social mobility", he must not skip the detail from the manner in which Kebell brings a three-dimensional reality to the book. And Kebell does so because he turns up, again and again, in the Year Books. No one since Maitland has so effectively employed the evidence

of this unique, and uniquely problematical source; the treatment of Year Books evidence is one of the triumphs of Ives's book, a triumph derived from the author's ranging knowledge of law and lawyers but also from his wisdom in making the Year Books do no more than they can. For they tell us virtually nothing about society and politics and should not be much employed there; surprisingly, they do not tell us all that much of the law since mostly they record arguments about it; what they really reveal is the places and the attitudes they brought to the art they practised.

So, a solid and notably important achievement; but where is the time-bomb? Its existence is in fact very fairly announced in the first section of the book, in the course of a run-down on the law and its courts which shows that law and those courts to be at the time the real essence and the activating mechanism of all social relationships. As Ives says, "the place of the lawyers in English life was a symptom, not a cause; a symptom that legal procedures and legal ideas were integral to society." But really grasping that point will compel some thorough rethinking of much that has passed for the social history of those centuries, put together by scholars to whom the reliance on the modern criteria of society (sociological and economic) is as obviously commonplace as an acquaintance with the law is alien. Assuredly those who regard concentration on kings and governments as insufficient are absolutely right: we need to know about the shires, about the local rulers, about the networks of patronage if we wish to understand that society and its preoccupations. At present, however, most enquiries employ methods and attitudes that must be called onobronstic – the methods of the social scientists and the attitudes of an age in which the law is a servant, and one rarely used at that. In the half century before the Reformation (indeed, through centuries before and after that) the fact is that all the social structures we can discern lived on and by the law.

In that society common ideas, ordinary ambitions and the making of policies all revolved around the specificities of the law, whose machinery formed the instruments of social action and therefore dictated the form that action had to take. Without a sound understanding of the law, the courts and its agents, the behaviour of individuals and groupings will be regularly misinterpreted, and this

particularly applies to the much-studied questions of patronage, power and faction. Though legal history is in a welcome phase of revival and (as this book shows) turning increasingly to the more general problems of society and affairs, it has to be said that many of the historians who have endeavoured to burrow below the surface of events know little or nothing of it. Let us hope that, guided by such as Ives, more and more scholars will abandon their textbooks of sociology and social psychology, will forget about generalized and impressionistic notions concerning people's behaviour, and will try to learn about the system under which those generations actually lived. Giles Jacob's *Law Dictionary* should become their bible. They will need it, for, as Ives also shows, legal historians do not make any concessions and expect their brethren to know obscure things by the dozen which have not troubled the general mind for centuries. And quite right too. The relations between clients and patrons turned upon such things as fraudulent recoveries, rights of remainder, reversionary interests, writs of covenant, grants in frankalmoin, and all the rest of that mysterious armoury of the law. The social history of the time is legal history or it is nothing.

One further major conclusion emerges from this book. The ways of Yorkist and early-Tudor lawyers must seem strange to anyone reasonably familiar with the reputation and practice of the law later in the sixteenth century. Judges and serjeants who treat the law as variable and malleable and ever open to dispute, lawyers who combine a theoretical respect for statute with great freedom in interpreting it and even greater freedom in misquoting it, a supposed reliance on precedents which practises constant and extreme imprecision in the citing of cases; a strange law indeed. Ives refers to "a perceptible fluidity" in it. This is to put it mildly. Manifestly, what the law was taken to be depended to a disquieting degree on the craft of a pleader, on counsel's or the judge's often uncertain memory of a statute or a Year Book case, on a destabilizing willingness to debate rather than to resolve.

By the middle of the sixteenth century a great transformation had taken place as lines got established, precision became something to be looked for, the law became knowable and known to the point where equality was practised because it could modify the law's rigours. (In that pre-Reformation

era, the lines between law and equity seem vague, but not in a beneficial sense because the vagueness led to the dominance of accident rather than the provision of remedies.) The new state of affairs could in the end substitute rigour for precision and reduce the amount of justice the law could offer, but in the first place it provided the sort of stability for society which the law always claimed was its chief end.

While Ives, only briefly looking beyond his terminal date, gives some hints about what happened, see may, perhaps rashly, isolate three major agents of this change. One was the renovation of the law to meet new circumstances, carried out by the courts themselves as they exploited the old flexibility; this has lately been most admirably brought to knowledge by J. H. Baker. The second was the new authority vested in parliamentary statute which followed in the wake of the work done by the Reformation Parliament. Statute came to codify developments in the uncertain areas of the law, and new rules of judicial interpretation subjected the profession to its dominance. Of course, acts of parliament left much room for argument, but even so the gain in precision was immense. However, perhaps the most influential thing of all to hit law and lawyers was technological – the impact of printing. Kebell and his colleagues cited as they pleased, gaining praise from Ives when their quotations somewhat resembled the original; their successors had printed Year Books and sessional printings of statutes to guide them and also to hang over them. Thomas Kebell's estate included twenty-nine books (a good number for that day), only four of them books of the law and not one of them a collection of statutes. By 1600, no lawyer of his eminence would have thought himself well equipped with so few.

Thus the history of the law and its minions must be added to the mounting evidence which says that from the 1530s onwards a new England emerged from the shell of the old, innovation being drastic though it was modified by continuity. And despite the transformation, one fact of the centuries yet the country and the nation were ruled, regulated and ravaged by the law. Because this basic fact of life has gradually vanished from the past hundred years, modern historians need the sort of lesson taught by Dr Ives if they are to get that vanished society into correct focus.

I have really been fooled by the seeming slowness of the conveyor belt. No one can understand how it works without experiencing it. Almost as soon as I begin, I am dripping with sweat. Somehow, I learn the order of the work motions, but I am totally unable to keep up with the speed of the line.

My work-gloves make it difficult to grab many tiny bolts as I need and how many precious seconds do I waste doing just that? Some skill is needed, and a new hood like one can't do it alone. I'm thirsty as hell, but workers can neither smoke nor drink water. Going to the toilet is out of the question. Who could have invented a system like this?

This diary of a young Japanese journalist, who worked for six months in 1972-3 at Toyota's main plant in Japan assembling gear-boxes, was first published in Japanese ten years ago. The current debates over the need to protect American and European industries from Japanese competition led to "learn from Japan" have now to him. And when the London book was said to have been ready to kill a man convicted of attempted buggery in 1719, Burg counters that "this need not have been the case".

On this assortment of guesswork, sententious generalization and downright error the author alleges that his findings substantiate the views of advocates of acquired homosexuality, demonstrate that homosexual communities can function virtually independent of heterosexual society, and that the martial capabilities of homosexuals are in no way inferior to those of heterosexuals. Nothing he adduces in relation to the Caribbean proves substantiates any of these claims.



One of the sets of "Sketches of Scenes from Daily Life" by Watanabe Kazun (1793-1841) reproduced in *Reflections of Reality in Japanese Art* by Sherman E. Lee with a catalogue by Michael R. Cowling and James T. Ullah (292pp. Cleveland Museum of Art with Indiana University Press. £42. 0 910386 70 6).

Anxieties of the assembly-line

Keith Thurley

SATOSHI KAMATA

Japan in the Past Tense: An insider's account of life in a Japanese auto factory

Translated and edited by Tatsuri Akimoto
211pp. New York: Pantheon Books.
\$14.95.
0 394 52718 6

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account of the impact of the assembly-line system on the inexperienced or probationers. Kamata does not disguise the fact that although the workforce may resent the system, it did not protest openly. Glimpses turn into "soldiering-on" jokes, and, as Dore comments, an amazingly friendly relationship exists between workers and a good deal of kindness and support between workers and supervisors. Kamata's attack on Toyota, and on the assembly-line system, centres on the pressure for high production and on the effect of working on an assembly-line with a work-cycle of eighty seconds. His prose is direct and moving and the diary format (often used in Japanese literature) gives the book pace and immediacy. We be written.

I'm tired. I don't believe anybody could be more tired. In this what "labour-intensive" means? I never imagined there was "labour so intense" that you couldn't rest even one second. The only consolation is that I smoke less now. In the dormitory I do nothing but sleep.

It is difficult not to believe him. But when one begins to interpret his account, doubts appear. Kamata's marginal status in the firm, and the fact that he is writing about a period when the Japanese automobile industry was desperately trying to increase production, while contending with quite severe labour shortages, mean that his experience is not typical. The Toyota plant was a simple case in that there were no robots, although it is of course true that there are still many operations in the car industry which have not yet been automated. Several aspects of Kamata's story contrast strikingly with other studies of Japanese firms: he was given no proper training, possibly because he was a seasonal worker; the production system was apparently not based by inadequate planning and arbitrary decision, and there is no evidence here of any real consultation with workers, except through high-level union channels. Although some discussion was permitted at work-group level from Kamata's position it is only too easy to see that all decisions were taken as "given". Managers as well as workers seemed to look on sickness

and accidents as caused by individual weaknesses, rather than by the work system itself. In order to arrive at a considered judgment on Kamata's book, it is necessary to compare it with the only two other accounts of the Toyota factory system published in English in recent years: Shin-ichi Takazawa's report *Improvements in the Quality of Working Life in Three Japanese Industries* (1982), which included a study of Toyota in the mid-1970s, and Robert E. Cole's *Mobility and Participation* – an excellent study of a Toyota plant in the early 1970s. Professor Takazawa describes the various improvements at Toyota in the standard of hostel accommodation, canteen facilities, sports centre, etc., all of which are very much at odds with Kamata's description. The wage figures quoted by Kamata refer to his own pay as a seasonal worker and show that he started off at two-thirds of the average pay in the industry for 1972 (the equivalent of £236). After four months, his pay had increased to this average, but the reason for the increase was not, as he says, for an approach lay with overtime, shift allowances and a production allowance. Kamata argues that the latter is very important and can vary by a margin of 40 per cent, so that "this is functionally a piece-work payment system". Strangely, neither Takazawa nor Professor Cole, who specifically analyses the Toyota wage system, mentions production allowances.

Ronald Dore believes that *Japan in the Past Tense* is a useful book in that it will help foreigners to understand the Japanese context of Quality Control Circles and mass suggestion schemes. If such ideas are to be adopted in Britain, then the problem is to know whether the basic condition of trust between management and workers could be further developed here. Dore is optimistic on this point. He thinks that what he calls the "holistic-corporation" recipe (seeing the organization one works in as a co-operative enterprise) can be kept separate from attitudes of dependence and subservience to workers, a Japanese feature which he thinks is not transferable. Even in Japan, Dore sees the gradual decline of the frontier workaholic ethic. In spite of his optimism however, it is unlikely that many will see Kamata's book as an

Bulk in the bookstalls

James Kirkup

FREDERIK L. SCHODT

Manga Manga! The world of Japanese comics
260pp. Tokyo: Kodansha International. \$19.95.
0 87011 549 9

Japan is the paradise of comics. They come in all shapes and sizes, but the most common format is the size of a London telephone-directory. They appear weekly, and each issue sells up to 3 million copies. The rare few that are left over each week are pulped to make new ones. Every day, Japanese residential streets resound to the over-amplified call of the collectors of old newspapers, magazines and comics: if you stack up a big enough pile, you can receive a roll of toilet-paper in exchange. Indeed, Japanese comics use up more paper than the whole nation's consumption of toilet paper.

One can not escape comics in Japan: they are everywhere, most notably in the open displays at the front of bookshops, bakeries, confectionery stores, grocery-stores and stationers. They are in the waiting-rooms of doctors, dentists and cosmetic surgeons, and lie beside the flower arrangements in banks for the entertainment of customers and their children. Many have used plastic models of cartoon characters and animals to attract family custom and create a "soft", child-like environment in institutions not noted for softness of heart. In university bookstores, one does not find students eagerly perusing Sartre or Updike or Fris Murdoch: they are all deep in the latest issue of

"Shonen Jump" – three hundred pages of fast-paced, wildly improbable, sketchily-drawn and often crudely composed stories with a minimum of words. A practised scanner can get through such a tome in about twenty minutes while standing in the shop, whose owners amiably tolerate such behaviour in readers from six to sixty. In Japan bookstores are also public comic-clubs and reading-rooms. The prices of such monster comics are very modest – about 50p – but no one is forced to buy, so that an issue of 3 million may have a weekly readership of two or three times as great. Because there is little vandalism in Japanese cities, there are thousands of vending-machines purveying every type of manga, many of them pornographic. It is not unusual to see a "salaryman" in a sober business-suit open his Vuitton attache-case on a Bullet Train and take out two or three of these blockbuster comics.

The manga are aimed at all walks of life, and every kind of spirit, profession, craft and sexual obsession has its share in the trade, with overlapping readerships: high-school girls are crazy about stories of homosexual loves between pretty young foreign boys, married men are fascinated by comic books depicting the joys and sorrows of life, and little boys learn the facts of life from pseudo-scientific sex stories of every persuasion, even though because of Japan's stringent censorship laws the comic artist somehow has to depict the sexual act without showing pubic hair. Sexual parts have to be blacked out, using a vial of army-of-part-time workers, from students to retired office personnel.

Frederik L. Schodt's excellent survey covers a multitude of themes.

He has an amusing section on the special onomatopoeic effects used by Japanese comic illustrators, who usually write their own scenarios. Some of these are very subtle, like *suru-suru* (the sound of someone slurping noodles), *hira-hira* (leaves falling), and the many types of rain – *za-bon-za-bon* or *para-para*. When a penis suddenly stands erect the accepted sound is *blin*, and when someone's face grows red with embarrassment we have *po*. The whisper of chilled cream being added to hot coffee is *suron*, and even the sound of silence itself is *shinin*. A samurai-assassin may vanish into thin air with the sound of *fu*.

Overworked, frustrated and humiliated housewives, and salarymen and children who, from the kindergarten onwards, have to suffer an "examination hell" beyond belief in Western countries, all turn to the manga for release and temporary relaxation in a world of total fantasy. The extreme violence, sadism, blood-letting and cannibalism in many of the stories may be partly to blame for the recent escalation of teenage violence in schools and lycées, often ending in mutilations and murder. Yet the manga remain ever-popular in a land where interest in real books is steadily declining. There is even a Buddhist temple dedicated to the souls of used comic-books. Jorakuji in Kawasaki City, commonly known as Magadora or "Cartoon Temple". This is quite fitting, because some of the earliest comic-strips, created hundreds of years ago, were inscribed on temple walls, and can still be seen in certain places.

One of the ever-popular forms of comic is that called *ero-guro-nansensu* (erotic grotesque nonsense) which treats sexual follies and abnormalities in a healthily humorous and outrageous way. Buddhist priests are often depicted demonstrating "how to sex" to young acolytes. Another prominent genre is the SF tale, also liberally dosed with sex, even for the very young. Unusual and aberrant women have often been portrayed, and the Japanese admiration of blonde hair, one blue eye is reflected in the many young androgynous heroes and heroines of soft-core school sex romances.

Mr Schodt has produced a highly amusing and insightful account, profusely illustrated, and ending with a group of *manga* tales. In English reading-left-to-right versions, one of which, "Barefoot Gen", the adventures of a boy in Hiroshima when the A-bomb is dropped, is a masterpiece of visual compression, with movie-style close-ups and wide-outs, and a highly expressive literary style. This comic-book story by Keiji Nakazawa, who actually witnessed the bombing of Hiroshima, has become one of the bibles of the anti-nuclear movement in Japan, and an international best-seller. Anyone wanting to find out all he can in the pleasant way about Japanese family life, society, culture, business and sport would do well to study this unique assemblage of texts, illustrations and commentaries.

Buggery below decks

Geoffrey Scammell

B. R. BURG

Sodomy and the Perception of Evil: English Sea Rovers in the Seventeenth-Century Caribbean
215pp. New York University Press.
\$26.
0 8147 1040 9

Among the many unhappy consequences of the founding of the first European overseas empires was the conversion of the Caribbean into a centre of privateering and piracy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Through its waters were carried cargoes of the legendary wealth of Spanish America. They were laden in ships which moved along predictable routes, skirting, on their way to Europe, galaxies of uninhabited or sparsely populated islands which formed ideal bases for marauders. For a time Spain's enemies sent out regular expeditions, such as that commanded by Piet Heyn on a celebrated occasion, to seize the silver convoys. But by the end of the seventeenth century, this erstwhile grand strategy had degenerated into indiscriminate footing and plundering by desperadoes of assorted nationalities, conducted with a violence and brutality remarkable even by the standards of

the age. Nor, according to B. R. Burg, was this all that they were remarkable for. Caribbean pirates, he alleges, were predominantly homosexuals, living free from heterosexual persecution and opprobrium, "completely socialized and acculturated", and by their deeds demonstrating that homosexuals equalled heterosexuals in "the most masculine of all human enterprises".

Mr Burg furthermore asserts that homosexuality was tacitly accepted in Stuart and Hanoverian England; that the upper classes read and emulated the precepts of such as Aretino; and that lower orders were impelled to sodomy by economic and social pressures. The bands of the poor roaming the country were predominantly male, and therefore, he concludes, like as not homosexual. Youths sent to serve apprenticeships were isolated from female company, and thus, he similarly concludes, like as not homosexual too. Then, according to Burg, with the great expansion of the English merchant fleet, and the rapid growth of the English navy from the mid-1600s, demanding sailors in unprecedented numbers, there came further encouragement and opportunities. So while heterosexuals went to sea to capture or fishing craft – supposedly rarely far from home and women – homosexuals opted for the oceanic trades, or for fighting ships, which meant months or even years away from women; and with the added prospect of being able to desert to the

even greater pleasures of the Caribbean.

There is nothing to recommend these assertions or Burg's presentation of them. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries produced much comment, most of it hostile, on the behaviour of seamen, especially those taken for naval service. Generally unpaid and usually unfed they not surprisingly mutilated, threatened the authorities in seaports or marched on the capital. Among the many vices attributed to them by the outraged or gruffed ruling classes was a lust for women so brutal and insatiable that they disregarded the contemporary proscription of copulating with menstruating females. Sodomy was certainly known in early modern England, and certainly known at sea. Whether attitudes to it were liberal at the time is a different matter. It was condemned by law. It was prohibited in the standing orders for voyages of exploration. Such prohibitions and condemnations were not the idle words of one of his ships hanged for buggery in his 1585-6 expedition, and sodomy was a court-martial offence in the following century. Nor does Burg have much luck in his search through English literature for works extolling or advocating homosexuality. The best he can find is *Rochester's Sodomy*, which in any case had to be published abroad. Even this, however, ends with a denunciation of buggery, and has the realm of Sodomy destroyed because of

their ruler's obstinate perseverance in such practices. As Burg himself admits, sodomy was not "an acceptable style of conduct" and homosexuals found it "prudent" to attract as little notice as possible. The latter hardly squares with his assertion of the liberality of the age.

On conditions at sea, and on the lives of the pirates in particular, Burg is even less convincing. He has, as he accepts, no worthwhile evidence, since pirates rarely recorded "experiences of any sort, let alone those of a sexual nature". This reduces him to facile generalizations. Given that in the colonial societies of the Caribbean European males outnumbered European females, the region, he claims, was a natural setting for homosexuality. He dismisses the testimony of contemporaries who alleged that in the Bahamas every man considered every woman his property. He similarly ignores the corroborative evidence of such as Captain Uring, and he attempts to dismiss episodes showing the brutal sexual relations of pirates with women, or their well-attested addiction to female African slaves. He recounts how on one occasion a commander slit a mae's stomach open, pulled the end of his intestines to a post, and then chased the wretch with a firebrand, so that he was entrained, unweaved as he sought to escape. Of such men Burg clinically comments that "they lived with an extremely high level of anxiety", though free from psycho-

pathological difficulties.

Burg is on his own admission no historian. His study is claimed to be "speculative social science" or "interdisciplinary sociology". What this means, apart from the pidgeon English of the relevant jargons, is an attempt to dredge up from the past some facts to fit the findings of modern studies of homosexuality. Evidence is construed to suit the author's preconceptions. Pyrrhia's denunciation (in *Historia-Mantia*) of homosexuality as "lewd, unnatural and abominable" is taken to show he was not overly concerned with it, just as Bueyan's simple statement that "men of Sodomy" were "sinners exceedingly" is quoted to show that sodomy was not particularly repugnant to him. And when the London book was said to have been ready to kill a man convicted of attempted buggery in 1719, Burg counters that "this need not have been the case".

On this assortment of guesswork, sententious generalization and downright error the author alleges that his findings substantiate the views of advocates of acquired homosexuality, demonstrate that homosexual communities can function virtually independent of heterosexual society, and that the martial capabilities of homosexuals are in no way inferior to those of heterosexuals. Nothing he adduces in relation to the Caribbean proves substantiates any of these claims.

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commentary

Man into image

Richard Combs

The King of Comedy
Various cinemas

Comedy as an outlet for rage, aggression, frustration, for monomaniacal dreams of success chasing a paranoid need for privacy: *The King of Comedy* is much more the obsessive territory of Martin Scorsese than its light-hearted title might suggest. In fact, although its protagonist (or double, mirror-image protagonists) doesn't go through the physical paroxysms of *Raging Bull*, the two films run closely parallel – as savage studies of show business and, more interestingly, of the self-involvement of the performer of the curiously annihilatory desire to put oneself on show. The link is emphasized in one particular effect which *The King of Comedy* carries over from *Raging Bull*. As the "king" in question, TV crier show host Jerry Langford (Jerry Lewis) runs his nightly gauntlet of hysterical fans, and his would-be emulator Rupert Pupkin (Robert De Niro) emerges from the crowd, flash bulbs seem to be going off with the explosive threat of an ambush.

This could be the beginning of a case history, or a piece of social criticism about the envy and false expectations that show-business glamour and hype engender. Rupert is so completely in thrall to the idea of being a TV comedian that it takes the length of the film before he can acknowledge that Langford (whom he buttonholes, besieges and bullies at every opportunity) wants nothing to do with him or his material. This might also fit into the current psychopath genre, in the distinct sub-section dealing with the latently ambiguous feelings of the anonymous for the famous (Lauren Bacall's *The Fan*, for example). Only at its least satisfactory, most

tendentious moment, however, does *The King of Comedy* have any relation to the above. That moment is its very last, when it seems that Rupert really does achieve fame and fortune, not through his talents as a comedian but through the notoriety of his final desperate bid to be invited onto Langford's show by kidnapping its host.

What makes this unsatisfactory is that it doesn't so much clinch an argument as provide a get-out. When Rupert appears at the end on stage, seraphically acknowledging one more "canned" audience response, the ambiguity over whether he has actually achieved his own TV show or is simply living out another fantasy (the film has more clearly signalled quite a few of these) is irrelevant to the character breakdown we have already seen. It doesn't matter whether the smooth-talking, self-assured but comically immature and narcissistic Rupert could actually "make it" as a comedian; he is already one half of a double act with the man who has made it, smooth-talking but frightened Jerry Langford, the public figure with so little room for privacy that he is virtually not there (part of the peculiar tension of the film is that it asks for only a kind of irascible performance from so identifiable a comic persona as Lewis). The brilliance of Scorsese's film – and the "comedy" of what must otherwise seem a very dyspeptic view of the business of making people laugh – is the conundrum it has locked these two into, a conundrum (or a prison) that is very much the product of its own crisply reductive style.

The style, it must be said, is very different from Scorsese's flamboyant norm. Talking heads predominate over expressive camerawork, and the stilted framing in a way suggests that the whole thing could be taking place inside a TV chat show (confusion of art and life is one of Rupert's problems, or at least the instant conversion of life

into TV terminology). It is a style which not only lowers the emotional temperature but also tends to separate the participants in individual shots rather than linking them in those bravura partnerships of camera and actor more characteristic of Scorsese. Rupert and Langford are partners who have nothing to do with each other (except in Rupert's fantasy), a reduction to *abstrusum* of such deluded and doomed pairings as De Niro and Harvey Keitel in *Mean Streets* and De Niro and Liza Minnelli in *New York, New York*. Liza Minnelli turns up here in effigy, a cardboard cut-out in the perfect facsimile of a chat-show studio which Rupert has created in his basement and which is all we see – in another metaphor for his thwarted, fixated personality – of his home.

Across this separation, a series of details brings the characters together in a chain of associations that is also a prison, of desire both unreciprocated and fantasized. The camera draws attention to a play of hands, of objects exchanged, borrowed and purloined – both emphasizing the lack of any emotional transaction and lending the film an air of abstraction-in-the-concrete that is a little reminiscent of Robert Bresson. One might cite *Pickpocket*, although Scorsese makes his own direct reference to another classic of that trade when *Pick-up on South Street* is glimpsed on TV in the chillingly all-white eyrie where Langford retreats from the pressures of being famous. Another object that creeps into this interchange is the gun eventually brandished by Rupert when he kidnaps him and blackmails his way into being given some air-time. The violence threatened in those exploding flash bulbs is finally delivered. Although, as the gun actually turns out to be empty, the equivocal catharsis of *Taxi Driver* never takes place. What both Rupert and his prisoner are hostage to in the end is the desire to turn themselves into images.

Author, Author

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office no later than July 22. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 129" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on July 29.

1 Who, when he saw the first Sand or Ashes, by a casual Intensity of Heat melted into a Motellino Form, rugged with Excrecences, and clouded with Impurities, would have imagined, that in this formless Lump lay concealed so many Conveniences of Life, as would in time constitute a great Part of the Happiness of the World? Yet by some such fortuitous Liquification was Mankind taught to procure a Body at

once in a high Degree solid and transparent, which might admit the Light of the Sun, and exclude the Violence of the Wind.

2 . . . and my Father had a genius for instruction. Miss Wilkes was never weary of expressing what a revelation of the wonderful works of God in creation her acquaintance with us had been. She would gaze through the microscope at awful forms, and would persevere until the elver rim which marked the confines of the drop of water under inspection would ripple inwards with a flash of light and vanish, because the drop itself had evaporated.

3 I lift a field itself
As lightly as I might a shelf,
And the rooks do not rago
Caught for a moment in my crystal cage.

Competition No 125
Winner: William Patmer
Answers:

Fifty years on: 'Love on the Dole'

The TLS of June 29, 1933, carried the following review by Mrs D. L. Murray of *Love on the Dole* by Walter Greenwood:

It would be interesting a hundred years hence, to hear what students of twentieth-century England have to say about such a book as *Love on the Dole*, by Walter Greenwood (Cape, 7s 6d net). As a novel it stands very high, but it is in its qualities as a social document that its great value lies. Harry Hardcastle and his wife Helen are typical of thousands of their contemporaries. And so is Sal Hardcastle, Harry's sister, and her fated lover, Larry. They all have the tragic gift of vision which makes them lose the slum in which they exist; they all have the tragic craving for beauty which brings Larry to his death and Sal

to humiliation. Harry's passionate desire to create which made him, at fourteen, throw aside his safe but sordid job as clerk in a pawnshop for the giant engineering works is killed cruelly and inevitably as he realizes that he is merely a tiny cog in a soulless machine, which "rotates him" and thousands like him on to the streets at the age of twenty-one with practically no further chance of employment. Helen's craving for orderliness and a decent home brings her to one room in a slum house, while Sal's longing for beauty which made her choose Larry, the gentle agitator for horology, throws her finally into the arms of Sam Grundy, the "bookmaker". Mr Greenwood gives us a terrible picture of people caught in a trap, hopeless and helpless.



"Studies of Female Bothers", 1925, by Henry Moore, from the eighty-fifth birthday exhibition of his stone carvings, bronze sculptures and drawings at Marlborough Fine Art, 4 Albemarle Street, London W1 until August 12.

No turning-point

Jane Grayson

L'Argent
Camden Plaza

It is pure coincidence that Tolstoy was seventy-six when he finished writing his long short story "The False Coupon" and that Bresson is seventy-six in the year of the release of his adaptation of it. However, it is perhaps not surprising that Bresson, with his cinematic asceticism, his liking for strong situations, his preoccupation with fundamental issues of good and evil, of the wilfulness of man and the mysterious workings of God's grace, should now look beyond Dostoevsky and find a suitable case for treatment among Tolstoy's later writings.

No film director, of course, needs to make out a case for faithfulness to the original. The written word and the camera's eye are chalk and cheese. Bresson, in earlier adaptations of Bernanos, when the master was still alive, may have felt the need to plead the cause of *fidelity*. However, now he no longer does. In a recent interview published in *Le Monde* he speaks instead of the necessity of using a big name in the cause of "quickly conveying money, that is to say a producer – which is quint given the subject in hand."

Tolstoy's tale is a long-winded but essentially simple polemic written in support of his views on non-violence and non-resistance to evil with a few additional broadsides directed against his by now vanquished lesser demons of tobacco, alcohol and sex. For this exercise he hires an onomastic cast, embracing all classes of nineteenth-century Russian society, from the lowliest peasant to the Tsar himself. It is in two parts: the first shows the peripatetic odyssey of evil from the small beginnings of two schoolboys engaging in petty forgery; the second demonstrates the counterbalancing force for good, again from small and chance beginnings – an ageing widow ground down by everyday wear and the sermon on the Mount to a crippled tailor. Ultimately, this force for good reaches back to virtually all the protagonists, with one notable exception – the Tsar.

We can be grateful that Bresson's voracious curials drastically the contrapuntal-like construction and eliminates most of the Tolstoyan bugbears. Bresson has no quarrel with the State or the Church, though he may just have some fellow-feeling with Tolstoy's latter-day aversion to sex. Both the inciters to crime in his film, we note, are marked by a sexual motif: pictures of naked women by Andrei, a gentle slap on the thigh of a thieving class figure large in Tolstoy, an emphasis which Bresson endorses. The schoolboy's mother's handbag is lizard and the wretches which leads the bribe holds a quantity of alder bangles. This family has a push-button telephone. In the victim's flat the camera picks out a humble Bambie toy, an open milk-bottle and pot of jam. The victim's wife

has a pathetically limited wardrobe and her handbag looks plastic.

Admittedly some of Bresson's conventions are hackneyed and all are highly stylized, but there are some strikingly successful uses of sound, colour and camera-eye. Bloody war swills round a wash-basin, its other suicide attempt? No. The water runs clear. It is murder. Earlier, the bank robbery: it is that a plain-clothes policeman sitting reading a newspaper? We follow him. Agnès, as he scuttles out of the firing line, realize it is just a bystander. And Yve, the hero/victim parks his getaway car behind the same Renault 16 we saw in the opening shots: he is right outside the flat of the schoolboy who set motion this whole chain of events.

Bresson's acting is entirely modest. He rellaxes the juxtaposition of the parapernalia of the here-and-now with the essentially timeless. Impersonal quality of his table. Most of this transposition to modern times is neatly done: cash-card theft makes a fair equivalent to horse-stealing and, for an attempted suicide, pills make a convincing substitute for the rope. But some is patently unsuccessful. We see just about swallow the notion of a schoolboy having ready access to forged 500-franc notes, but for a police officer not to bother to ask the shop assistant to produce the original receipt of an old delivery when not only a small guilt or innocence, but the whole subsequent development of the plot hang upon it, is a gross oversight. Tolstoy wasn't in the business of writing detective stories either, but at least his premises are perfectly plausible.

Nelther Bresson nor Tolstoy is composing a psychological study. However, the film does might well question the plausibility of a what-faced shop assistant suddenly turning up to a cross between two Karamazovs and Robin Hood. The turning-point – the point at which the recalcitrant character comes into contact with the forces of good, Bresson's main divergence from Tolstoy's text is that he shows none of the dramatic climax of the film: the embittered victim's murder of the "good woman", barking dog, rabid axe, crash of table lamp, dark blood stains on "old-fashioned floral wallpaper". The code is in the dead-end confession to the police in a cold, in place of explicit demonstration we have learner just one marvelous sequence: a prisoner kneeling in prayer and apologizing to his hard-bitten cell-mate. Both the inciters to crime in his film, we note, are marked by a sexual motif: pictures of naked women by Andrei, a gentle slap on the thigh of a thieving class figure large in Tolstoy, an emphasis which Bresson endorses. The schoolboy's mother's handbag is lizard and the wretches which leads the bribe holds a quantity of alder bangles. This family has a push-button telephone. In the victim's flat the camera picks out a humble Bambie toy, an open milk-bottle and pot of jam. The victim's wife

Persecutions and pyrotechnics

John Rosselli

Eduardo De Filippo

Inner Voices
Lyttelton Theatre

Naples is Europe's star witness to the power men and women have of living on their emotional wits, of bringing to bloom true feeling in a seedbed of eccentric individuality, of achieving dignity in the face of want. The city, its people and its language are the stuff of Eduardo De Filippo's best plays. *Sunday, Monday and Filumena* is a dialect playwright not only literally but in his visceral relationship to the city he speaks for.

Yet one case overstate De Filippo's character as a popular bard. He is of the theatre (literally: the son of another famous actor-playwright, he first appeared on the stage at the age of four in a home film and revue. His plays are generally "well-made", his effects highly calculated. Behind them is not just the actor-playwright's long experience of what will work but a considerable knowledge of all kinds of theatre over sixty or seventy years. It is – very roughly – as if Noel Coward had written from and about the Gorbals.

Inner Voices (dashed off in 1948 to meet an emergency in his company's fortunes) belongs to what is generally thought his best period, the years just

after the liberation, when the twentieth century reached Naples. In some ways the play exemplifies De Filippo's truth to his native habitat; in others, rather uncomfortably obvious, it shows him plucking symbols and devices out of his theatrical trunk.

Dreams in Naples are often public. What goes on in them is open to interpretation of a practical kind: it may – properly understood – mean scooping the winning numbers in the lottery that focuses the hopes of many, and stores of knowledge and ingenuity are expended on it. At the same time the unseen has its dangerous side: not only to Neapolitans but to southerners generally, many events are to be explained by hidden, perhaps sinister causes – and if there is in this a touch of habitual paranoia, one must add that these people have had a lot to be paranoid about.

In *Inner Voices* the dreams are all of mayhem and corruption. Two women in the Cimmaruta household are the first to be troubled with extravagant dreams of blood. Their bachelor neighbour Don Alberto then has a dream of such overwhelming persuasiveness that he is sure the Cimmarutas have murdered an acquaintance and stuffed his bloody shirt behind the kitchen cupboard. He has them arrested, but the supposed evidence at once fades. That, however, is not the end of it. The evil suggestions of the unseen are catching: the Cimmarutas come trooping one by one

to charge each other with theft, adultery and murder: Don Alberto's brother turns traitor; his uncle, an elective mute who for years has communicated through occasional fireworks displays, acknowledges mon's inhumanity to man by lighting himself a final roman candle. "What have we come to?"

Much of this is original and effective on the Lyttelton stage, thanks in large part to the two sets by Raimondo Gualandri, one a kitchen where you sense the narrow dilapidated street outside, the other a stupendous representation of a high attic glory-hole, with chairs and catheter wheels piled up to the dusty skylights. Yet a suspicion persists that too much of the dramatic action echoes other plays; old tricks haven't been worked (as they were in *Filumena* and *Sunday, Monday, Monday*) into an autonomous whole. Isn't the uncle's left close kin to the attic in *The Wild Duck*, the death of the outsider in his party an echo of Hedvig's pistol shot? Doesn't the series of interviews with characters win one by one reveal themselves to be corrupt suggest a string of plays from *Timon of Athens* onwards? Once these doubts set in, it's difficult not to go on sensing a whiff of grease-paint: *Filumena* resolved itself into human warmth, but the moral of *Inner Voices*, that life was simpler and more genuine before these corrupt latter days, comes to seem sentimental because contrived.

The play is not helped by the

National Theatre production. Where Zeffirelli devised a way of rendering dialect through Italian ice-cream man's English – oddly effective – Mike Ockrent has N. F. Simpson's translation spoken in a variety of Home Counties accents: voice and gesture contradict the notion of place instilled by the sets. Thus Michael Bryant as the truculent brother gives a performance of extraordinary technical resource (speaking more clearly while scolling macaroni than most actors manage with their mouths empty), but the character comes off as a Brighton camp, a thousand miles from Piazza Dante. As for Sir Ralph Richardson, there is nothing new about the way he strings out words like beads at odd intervals, and then gives the string an unexpected upward flick. He has been doing it these thirty years at least; it is a fascinating display, but in a part as central as this (a character who is at once seer, sufferer and interactor) it merely reminds us that we are watching one more performance by a splendid old theatrical knight. Besides, it slows things down, and leaves one too much time to think.

True Mediterranean desperation comes only in Robert Stephens's performance as Pasquale Cimmaruta, the head of the family: he has filled out sideways, and now looks and behaves like Pierre Brasseur in the old film *Les Amours de Véronique* (very much on the right lines). The talking fireworks are the best part of the show.

Full of holes

John Hope Mason

EUGENE IONESCO

Exit the King
Lyric Studio, Hammersmith

Solitude takes many forms. There is the solitude of isolation, which we find in Pirandello, that of withdrawal, which we find in Beckett, and that of bewilderment, which we find in Ionesco. The first is an unwilling solitude, a furious protest at an inescapable pain; the second is voluntary, the anchorite preferring to endure his nocturnal delusions rather than face an unredeemable world. Ionesco stands somewhere between the two: solitude for him is a fact of life. In itself it presents no problem. The trouble is that the world keeps breaking in. Out of the clash between bewildered victims and obtrusive objects arises the distinctive mood of his plays.

As we would expect, death, being the most solitary of all experiences, occupies a prominent place in the work of all these writers, and two have written masterpieces on the subject – Pirandello in *The Man with a Flower in his Mouth* (seen earlier this month at the Lyric Studio) and Ionesco in *Exit the King*. In each case the plot is of the utmost simplicity – we see a man facing (and in Ionesco's play going through) his own death – but the concentration is intense.

Ionesco begins with the king's refusal to accept the fact that he must die. He resists, and out of this resistance great dramatic force is generated. His second wife, Marie, encourages him to resist, for she does not want him to die. His first wife, Marguerite, who loves him no less deeply (though her love is no longer returned), tries to break down their obstinacy. Only by accepting death can we fulfil our lives. To resist is to die in penic and hysteria, to accept is to die content. This is not a matter of surrender, but of the freedom that comes from recognizing necessity.

The struggle to make the king realize his destiny occupies the first third of the play. Once this is achieved his mood fluctuates from protest to self-pity to defiance to despair. "Why was I born if it wasn't for ever?" he complains. He would have the rest of the world die

rather than him. He desperately wants time to stand still, or, at least, the certainty that he will be remembered. In the final third of the play he comes at last to accept the fact. Then, as his faculties decline, his bewilderment – "I'm full of holes. It makes me giddy" – gives way to confusion. Ionesco's writing here is particularly fine, and excellently served by Donald Watson's translation. (Neither of them is well served by the programme which virtually ignores them.) There are two marvelous sequences: the king rhapsodizes over the man done features of life, while the nurse sits beside him, knitting, and contradicting everything he says. Then the guard praises the king's life, an *éloge* in the grand manner, for all the greatest human achievements have been accomplished by this man; and immediately after, we see the king attempting to recognize his surroundings, and the simplest act of naming seems like a work of genius.

The pathos and richness of this section of the play are well captured in Christopher Pettit's production, but the moods of the earlier scenes are not set in sufficient relief. There is too much thenody, not enough sense of purpose. Ionesco once called the play "an apprenticeship in dying", and that aspect of the work, which is in the hands of the actress playing Marguerite (Julia Blalock), is completely misdirected here. We are given simplified vindictiveness instead of unsentimental (but loving) resolution. The other main weakness is James Aubrey as the king; he has neither the depth nor the authority that the part requires. This is a great role and it needs great acting. That the play comes across so strongly, despite these weaknesses, is a tribute to its own strength. Ionesco often has a problem ending his plays. For once that is not the case; here the ending is assumed from the start and this helps to give the work its remarkable sense of completeness. As with the Pirandello play, what acts out as a *memoriam mori* ends up as a triumph of life.

The Old Vic will re-open in October and its first season, for which a subscription system has been adopted, will present *Blondie*, a new musical by Tim Rice and Stephen Oliver, *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*, *The Boyfriend*, *Masterclass* – a new play by David Pownall – and *The Mikado*.

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M. R. James

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Michael Cox

To many readers M. R. James (1862–1936) is best known as the author of four collections of superb ghost stories. For scholars, his name is associated with outstanding work in the fields of palaeography, biblical scholarship, medieval studies, and bibliography. In a life of quiet distinction, James became Provost of King's College, Cambridge, and of Eton, the two institutions that captured his heart and form the backdrop to this story. Michael Cox draws on previously unpublished sources to present a sympathetic portrait of this arduous, humorous, lovable man. Illustrated £14.50

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Oxford University Press

Behind the lines

Robert Hewison

However prudent the reporting in these columns appears to be, it is none the less a hostage to fortune to raise the question of libel. It is a hazard of daily journalism, but the law and economics of libel have an even more deleterious effect on authorship, where books may be killed off at great cost, without ever having seen the light of day, merely by the threat of a libel action.

This was one of the themes of "Word Watching", a panel discussion at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, organized in conjunction with the Writers' Guild. The panelists all had the most direct experience of libel. The chairman, Michael Holroyd, had been unable to publish his first book, a novel, because of libel, and consequently had turned to biography, though he has never published a book without the threat of an action. Sheila MacLeod and Chancy Sigal are both novelists unable to publish because of libel, and Matthew Evans, a director of Faber and Faber, had to admit that his firm had innocently acquired "a pretty bad libel record". Only Michael Ruhlstein, one of the country's leading libel lawyers, could be said to have profited from the libel laws, though he is highly critical of the present system.

Technically, it is possible to be rude about someone in a book if you can prove beyond doubt that what you say is true, but it is sufficient merely to write something that "lowers them in the estimation of right thinking people". Court trouble. Many libels are unintentional, but libel damages are tax-free, and the £30,000 or so that it takes to fight off a libel action are sufficient to persuade most publishers to settle out of court. The book, and the author's chance of earning anything from the labour of writing, are meanwhile destroyed.

It may even be the case, as Mr. Sheila MacLeod, that no publisher will risk taking the book on in the first place. Ms. MacLeod has recently been divorced from the singer and actor Paul Jones; her most recent novel — her seventh — concerns the break-up of a show business marriage. She is convinced that her husband does not appear in his pages, but in spite of their appreciation of the novel's quality, no publisher will take the risk. Her former husband declines to say whether he will sue or not, and she concludes that the threat of libel is a matter of bluff and money. She cites the case of John Osborne's mother, as described in his autobiography, where her sex and relative lack of financial resources gave her none of the redress available to those who are rich and male. Her main objection was that unqualified persons were deciding the difference between fact and fiction; lawyers placed authors in the absurd position of seeking clearance for publication from the writer's imaginary characters.

Clancy Sigal concurred, and added that he had the distinction of himself being the victim of gross libels in three novels, two short stories and one play. However, his upbringing under the American Bill of Rights led him to believe more fervently in the right to information than the right to privacy. To him, the English libel laws existed to protect the upper classes, and in particular the dubious reputations of politicians. He pointed out that the most ardent users of the libel laws were the press. Secondly, it raises questions, and rightly so, about the right of the right and left. The Watergate affair would never have been reported under English libel law.

The problem remains of what to do about the risk of libel. Almost without exception, publishers' politicians in this country throw the entire responsibility for the consequences of libel on to their authors, who sign a warranty that may even exclude them from the deliberations and decisions of the publisher when a case is brought. Some publishers insure themselves against libel, and Faber and Faber have now pioneered an insurance scheme which protects their authors as well. Such schemes are becoming standard in America, but so far Faber are the only publishers here to show such concern for the author-publisher relationship.

The scheme has been instituted for only six months, so it may not be until next Spring that their underwriters' calculations are tested.

Insurance, however, is only a defensive measure, and a working party is currently being formed by the Writers' Guild, the Society of Authors, the Authors' Agents Association and other interested parties to press for a reform of the libel laws. Unfortunately, since politicians are among those most attached to the censoriousness of libel, and the present government appears reluctant to do anything about the even more pressing question of copyright, it is likely that for some time the paradox will remain that the victim of libel is often himself a victimizer.

While much public attention is being drawn to the consequences for the arts of Conservative plans to dismember the GLC, the other local source of metropolitan arts funding, the Greater London Arts Association, is privately tearing itself apart. The climax of the struggle will come in September, at a special general meeting of GLAA when constitutional changes (already approved in principle) will be put to the vote.

The drive for change in GLAA has come from those most associated with Community Arts, an art process rather than an art form, whose needs are at present catered for by one of the Association's eight advisory panels. Its chief spokesman has been an Executive Committee member, Martin Dyke Coomes. He is highly critical of the lack of direction given by the Executive Committee, and the lack of information provided by the Association's officers and advisory panels. As presently constituted, he says, GLAA is incapable of growth or change.

The changes proposed, in two-fold, a restructuring of the Executive Committee of GLAA so as to include greater representation from London's local boroughs and instead of the present eight advisory groups dealing with their respective art forms, four panels are proposed which will work across the categories. The four new panels will work to a policy laid down by a strong, themed committee.

Opposition to these proposals comes from the unlikely combination of the Film and Video, and the Literature Panels. They suspect a covert motive in the removal of their identities; that the aim is to divert as much money as possible to Community Arts and to get rid of many of the artists who presently constitute the advisory panels. They suspect that to be a professional artist, and therefore to have to make discriminatory judgments, is thought to be elitist.

Jim Mulligan, an IEA English Adviser on the Literature panel — and by no stretch of the imagination an elitist — has led much of the opposition to the proposed changes. He argues that "the real advisory work should come from those who know what they are doing, and that involves knowing something about the art form, and the other people who are helping to come to that decision". The proponents of change, however, will have to convince the Association's staff, and it is likely that there will have to be negotiations with their unions before major changes go through.

The irony is that the Greater London Arts Association has so little actual money — about one and half million pounds a year — to spend on the arts. Ninety per cent of applications from individual artists have to be turned down. At its last meeting, the Literature panel faced applications for publishing projects totalling £60,000; they have £6,000 for the purpose. In the larger perspective of GLAA's pathetic lack of resources, the exhausting battle over the constitution looks like a squabble for possession of an empty paper bag.

It is a sign of the esteem in which

imaginative writers are held in this country that the most unusual aspect of Sir Angus Wilson's recent election as President of the Royal Society of Literature should be that he is a novelist. His predecessor, who held the post for thirty years, was Lord Butler; before him came Field Marshal Viscount Weyland, compiler of the wartime anthology, *Other Men's Flowers*.

To authors, those not entitled to put the letters FRSL after their names, the Society has associations with the idea of a literary Establishment. I was glad to find when I visited their elegant (but rented) rooms in Hyde Park Gardens that if this is the literary Establishment, then it is of a benign and open-minded character.

The Royal Society of Literature was founded in 1823, and chartered in 1825 with the expressed object "to unite and extend the general interests of Literature; to reward Literary Merit by Patronage; to excite Literary Talent by Premiums; and to promote Literary Exhibitions at the Universities and Public Schools, in case of distinguished desert." It is indicative of the esteem in which literature as a whole is held in this country that the Society has almost no funds with which to pursue these intentions.

The present patronage exercised by the Society is limited to the presentation of two annual prizes under the Heinemann and Winifred Holby bequests, the occasional award of the A. C. Benson Silver Medal, and the publication of *Essays by Divers Hands*, a selection from the Society's regular lectures. (Volume XLII, New Series, edited by Michael Holroyd, was reviewed in the TLS on February 11.) There are no scholarships at universities or public schools.

The chief excitement to literary talent extended by the Society is a Fellowship of the Society itself. (There is also an ordinary membership, limited to 300, and since 1961 there has been the higher honour of Companion of Literature.) Thus on Establishment pattern emerges. Direct application for a Fellowship is of course impossible (even, unthinkable); candidates must be sponsored by two Fellows, and even then it is by no means certain that the fifteen or so members of the Society's Council will agree to confer the honour. Candidates must have published "books of a high literary standard" — the plural places an emphasis on quantity as well as quality. There are at present some 400 Fellows, and it is their subscription of £15 a year and the fruits of accumulated legacies that finance the Society. This is a very British society, proud of its royal patronage, and equally proud of its independence from all government support.

Who then has met the Society's own standards? In the nineteenth century it is true that the Society was dominated by the Church and the aristocracy; neither Dickens nor Thackeray was a Fellow — but from the beginning of this century practising writers have had an important say in the Society's affairs. Names like Shaw, Galsworthy and Conrad began to figure in the Society's lists. Today the Fellowship divides between a third poets and novelists, a third historians and a third critics and academics.

The election of Sir Angus Wilson as President underlines the Society's commitment to "literature" as opposed to literary antiquarianism. On his election Sir Angus stressed that he hoped the Society "will be in touch with things as they are now", and he was particularly pleased that the Society's two awards should go to a West Indian, Derek Walcott, and a Japanese, Kazuo Ishiguro. The canon of literature in the eyes of the Society is defined by the Society's own members, its most recent selections are therefore significant, among them, Humphrey Carpenter, Rose Tremain, James Fenton, A. N. Wilson (who is now on the Society's Council), Clive Snelgrove, and Salman Rushdie. It is indicative of the co-optive nature of the British literary intelligentsia that they should honour their juniors — and that their juniors should be happy to accept.

to the editor

E. H. Carr as Historian

Sir, — No doubt the decision of Leopold Lahedz (June 10) and of Norman Stone (*London Review of Books*, January 20) to launch their massive attacks on E. H. Carr not, let us say, on the completion of his *magnum opus* in 1978 but now, when he has just died, can be seen as a back-handed compliment to that remarkable man. But as a result, the scholarly community has been deprived of the chance to see how Carr would have responded to this challenge. After all, it was Isaiah Berlin's critique of Carr's *What is History?* (1961) which set in motion an exchange exemplified in its pithiness, its humour and its ultimate seriousness. Even though the one man defended the liberal tradition and the other chafed against it, the debate conducted by them both represents that tradition in quintessential form. In this present case, the thing and still more the tone (of which the less said the better) are all but inexplicable. The adage, *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*, is not suitable to the contemporary age, but this hardly means that it should henceforth be applied in exact reverse.

JONATHAN FRANKEL.

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Sir, — To enter into a discussion on Trotsky's "Thermidor Thesis" would be futile. But can Leopold Lahedz, in his review (June 10) of E. H. Carr's *The Twilight of Communism*, seriously maintain that the publication of one letter of Trotsky to Radek would have "undermined" "the whole ideological edifice of his [Trotsky's] biography of Trotsky"? The whole ideological edifice? May I suggest that Lahedz gets better acquainted with the evolution and frequent revisions of Trotsky's conception of Thermidor? He could look up Volume 2 and Volume 3 of Deutscher's biography of Trotsky where nearly fifty pages are devoted to this subject.

TAMARA DEUTSCHER.
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We regret that, in Alec Nove's letter in last week's issue, the sentence beginning "Progress" he did believe in... was wrongly printed as "Progress" he did not believe in...

Epitaphs

Sir, — When you go home, Tell them of us and say: For your tomorrow We gave our today.

A recently published book about the Fourteenth Army alleges that the famous epitaph to the fallen of 2 Division at Kohima was written by Leonidas, King of Sparta. Perhaps I may be given this opportunity to clear up the question of the origin of these lines, which commemorate one of Britain's decisive victories in the Second World War?

Major-General J. M. L. Grover, who commanded 2 Division, wrote in *Despatch*, the journal of the Burma Star Association, in April 1969, that the epitaph was composed by Major John Elwell, of the Division's GSO II, and that his inspiration was probably an epitaph written during the First World War by J. M. Edmonds.

To this I can add the following. On July 4, 1918 the TLS published a letter from Edmonds which contained four "suggested epitaphs", one of which, "for a British graveyard in France", ran thus:

"When you go home, tell them of us, and say: For your to-morrow these gave their today."

The idea that there is some kinship between the Kohima Epitaph and Leonidas is not, however, without foundation. John Maxwell Edmonds (1875-1958) was a Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, and a Greek scholar who published a number of translations of ancient Greek poetry,

including epitaphs. In a letter to his friend Sydney Cockerell, the typographer, dated March 11, 1950, Edmonds wrote, referring to the period when he composed his "suggested epitaphs": "I was editing Simonides and Co. — about that time, and their spirit, I hope, is in my work." Simonides of Ceos was a poet who wrote the famous lines on the Spartan rearguard Thermopylae against the Persians in 480 BC — the epitaph of which, in a translation into English, runs:

Tell it in Sparta, thou that passest by: Here, faithful to their charge, her soldiers lie.

BRIAN PEARCE
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Little Sparta

Sir, — In the article I wrote (April 10) on the garden and garden temple at Little Sparta, Lanarkshire, I set out in the clearest form possible a situation which is deplorable both in its nature and its implications for the artist versus bureaucracy. I ended with specific questions addressed to the Scottish Arts Council and to Scottish writers in general. Between them they were able to scrape up not even one sentence in response or justification. Nor, indeed, do they seek to refute the case I made, since it was accurate in all particulars.

This raises various questions. What is a culture when artists with shared values and objectives are unwilling to defend one another and support one another in such circumstances? What is the position of an Arts Council which remains silent during a major conflict of this kind and, when taxed with silence, persists in it?

Since I wrote my piece, other obvious recourses have been tried. Mr. Finlay's MP, Dame Judith, has suggested that we write to the Lord Advocate. He referred us to the Sheriff Principal whose job it is to discipline the sheriffs. We received from the Sheriff Principal a derisory reply and, better, no reply at all from the Lord Advocate or from Dame Judith. She has been otherwise occupied no doubt, and we still have hope in that quarter.

There appears to be no dispute of the fact that the sheriff cannot require property not belonging to the artist in lieu of payment of debts. Mr. Finlay has proven his ownership and has documents of proof which are available to the sheriff officer. He has been invited to view them and has refused. The law being flouted, the Scottish Arts Council, one ought not to have to go on one's knees to the Scottish Arts Council, the local authority, or anyone else, in order to get them to observe the law. One ought not to have to employ solicitors for the simplest of social dealings. Clearly something has gone wrong and it can only be resolved by the intervention of individuals of good will. Are there any such in that area of the world?

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'A Month in the Country'

Sir, — Writing about *A Month in the Country* (Commentary, May 13) Elizabeth Winter states that "although fluent in French and German, Turgenyev never attempted to write in any language other than Russian."

Not so. Turgenyev did write at least one little play in French, in honour of his old friend Pauline Viardot. The play, called *Une Nuit à l'Opéra*, was discovered only in 1960, and appeared in the 1960s and 1970s in the *Heritage* series in Moscow, 1964. It is included in the part of this volume called "From the Parisian archive of I. S. Turgenyev" — the French original followed by a Russian translation.

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Studying the Human Mind

Sir, — Gratifying though it is to be singled out for criticism in Stuart Sutherland's review (June 17) of Jonathan Miller's *States of Mind* it is disappointing that the champion of the old guard should have produced so feeble an offering. To claim that one's opponent has not said anything relevant is one of the necessity of working up a rational objection to what has been said. This is the well-known strategy of the Paduanos when offered a peep through Galileo's telescope. To set the record straight:

To the assertion that ethogenic social theory is vacuous one can only reply by restating briefly its two basic principles to allow the reader to judge whether or not they lack content. The first principle is that human social relations are created and maintained mainly by speech; the second that the predominant motivation of social interactions is the maintenance of reputation and its subjective counterpart, self-respect. A methodological consequence of provisionally accepting these as leading principles is that social psychological research should, at least for the moment, turn to micro-sociology and socio- and psycholinguistics for its main research methods.

Sutherland's second unsubstantiated claim was that Miller's question about the scientific status of the above "new paradigm" was not answered. But consultation of the text will show that it was answered at length by reference to a sketch of the most recent views of philosophers as to the main features of those disciplines we call science. Again briefly to recapitulate: I reiterate the main points of my reply since they are at the heart of the critique of the claim of much contemporary psychology to the status of a science. An enterprise might reasonably be called scientific if it takes up the essential form of those studies such as physics and chemistry, which we unhesitatingly recognize as paradigms. What differentiates such studies from natural history is a concern with theory. In practice this concern appears as a dialectic between the refinement of explanatory concepts and the power of those concepts to pick out repeatable patterns in whatever might be the field of interest. Experiments tell us how good our conceptual work has been. Far from being "vacuous", to quote our "scientific" Sutherland, my proposals for building explanatory theories for social psychology were quite precise.

They involved the statement and testing of hypotheses, the construction of a hierarchy of models (analogues of the imperfectly understood events that make up a social world. This is the familiar method of the physical sciences, repeated with success many times over. Models, as Clerk Maxwell emphasized, provide the necessary control of concepts to ensure that our theories are "consistent representations" of our subject matter.

May I offer readers rather more information about the authorship of *The Turkish Spy*, based on the results of research in Eastern and Western Europe and elsewhere over roughly the past fifteen years?

1. The basic text for the examination of Giovanni Paolo Marana's involvement in *The Turkish Spy* is not the original English edition and neither is it the volume published by Barbin in 1984, and those which shortly followed but, Marana's original manuscript, in Italian, discovered in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris).

This vital and fascinating document includes Letters 1-63 and contains the Italian original of a volume hitherto thought only to exist in the French language. The manuscript differs significantly from the Barbin text which, for instance, tones down the acerbic comments on the Genoese and Genoese politics which could not have been exposed to the reading public by the censor. This manuscript may have been done in an attempt to make *The Spy* more interesting to English readers. In the earliest editions there is little information about England or Britain in general, and what there is, is almost wholly uninteresting. What is more sensible than to offer the English-speaking reader some further views of Mahomet on his society? This problem became more urgent as the content of the novel became less and

'The Waste Land'

Sir, — The latest Chesterton biography, *Alzina Stone Dale's The Outline of Sanity*, reviewed by Hugh Kenner (June 3), does seem to be rather unfortunate. On the other hand, when a critic kills in this catlike way, he has to be on very sure ground. Otherwise we sympathize too much with the mouse.

Kenner takes exception to the claim that *The Waste Land* became a Bible for the disenchanted younger intellectuals who grew up in the 1920s, commenting: "As late as 1931 F. R. Leavis felt required to make the case for its being as much as a poem." True in a sense. But in 1931 Leavis was making out all sorts of cases. A typical spokesman for that generation like Louis MacNeice, however, didn't have to wait till 1931 and Leavis. In a well-known symposium on Eliot in 1948, MacNeice, looking back on his adolescent years in the mid-1920s, called *The Waste Land* "the poem... which most altered our conception of poetry and, I think one can add, of life." He found it almost impossible to describe the impact of the literary allusions, the cosmopolitan world, the anthropological symbolism, and was forced to explain it "by some such hypothesis as Jung's archetypal myths". Nor did the effect wear off: "... that the total complex of mood-and-meaning remains for me now, for all its enrichment by experience and study, qualitatively the same as it was then, strikes me as astonishing."

Elsewhere, describing himself at twenty-one (ie, in 1928), he said that *The Waste Land* hit him "in the way a person hits one". That, surely, is what a Bible is supposed to do?

Kenner is right to emphasize Chesterton's own admiration for Eliot. Interestingly, MacNeice's English master at Marlborough in a school report in 1921 advised him to "avoid G. K. Chesterton and slang."

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'The Turkish Spy'

Sir, — Gwyn A. Williams, in an article entitled "Prince Madoc and *The Turkish Spy*" (December 24, 1982), puts forward his conclusion on the authorship of the huge epistolary novel *Letters Written by Turkish Spy*, etc. The Madoc material is extremely interesting. Also, any new British archival evidence might well prove vital to our understanding of the compilation of this extremely complex text.

May I offer readers rather more information about the authorship of *The Turkish Spy*, based on the results of research in Eastern and Western Europe and elsewhere over roughly the past fifteen years?

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also it is politically more open.

2. There are good grounds for believing that the manuscript of many more letters also survives in the

Archives of the Bibliothèque Nationale, but it has been lost. However, the authorship of Marana up to and including Letter 101 (Volume 3) is a certainty, since he got into trouble with the censor and the documentation survives.

3. We know a considerable amount about the way in which Marana approached his work. There survives in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal (Paris) a part of the private papers of Pidot de St Olon, a former French emissary to Genoa, the friend and protector of Marana, and his first translator. Among this correspondence is a copy of a lengthy letter addressed to Marana, and in which St Olon goes into the details of his translation. He also makes comments on the structure that Marana is giving to his work, makes a few suggestions for improvements, and gives some critical comments on the oriental material. With this letter is a lengthy reply from Marana. He deals with some of the comments, but makes a vigorous defence of his method on the grounds that he had been given guidance and direct personal encouragement by Louis XIV, and that therefore he is fulfilling the royal command.

This important document also reveals Marana's wish for a pension, and shows that he formed a part of the large group of artists, historians, men of letters and others engaged on that huge project *L'Histoire du Roi*.

Marana's interpretation of the reign of Louis XIV is vital for understanding the overall pattern and inner meaning of *L'Esploratore*. His method was to choose a number of basic sources from which, much in the style of dramatists of the period, he could construct a "canvase". For French and Imperial affairs, he principally used Scipion Duplexis and the *Ordinaires* and *Extraordinaires* of the Gazette. This information was interpreted with historical and anecdotal material drawn from other literary sources, oral report and manuscripts. To all this novelistic inventions were added, but the overall purpose of the work was to be a panegyric of Louis XIV, and the expression of a mythology of the reign. In accordance with the symbolism and propaganda of the period, the great hero of the first part of the work is not Louis XIII, but Henry IV, and here Hardouin de Perceux was Marana's principal mine. Throughout all the volumes these methods and aims remain generally unchanged.

Since we are certain of the authorship of the first 101 letters, might there be any grounds for believing that Marana could be either the author or the rest of *L'Esploratore* or at least the guiding hand behind the whole? The Preface *Al Lettore* of the manuscript announces that the finished work will contain 500 letters and perhaps more ("Cinquante et più lettere"). This roughly corresponds to the length of the completed volumes, leaving aside the *Continuation*.

The method of composition which, as has been shown, is not that of a hack publication, remains largely the same from start to finish, whereas a much easier method could have been chosen as was done by Defoe in his additions.

Since we know that Marana wrote at least 101 letters, why should he not have carried on, since progress would have become easier once his structure and method had been established? Furthermore, he had the powerful inducement of royal encouragement and the pension that came with it — all the more powerful for one in a strained financial circumstances. Also, the evidence of successive English editions is confusing, since as the years went by the text underwent some alteration. The order of parts of letters is sometimes changed, there are additions made by the editors/ translators and fresh incidents inserted. In Guido Almansi's view this was done in an attempt to make *The Spy* more interesting to English readers. In the earliest editions there is little information about England or Britain in general, and what there is, is almost wholly uninteresting. What is more sensible than to offer the English-speaking reader some further views of Mahomet on his society? This problem became more urgent as the content of the novel became less and

less relevant to European politics with the passage of the years. For example, the symbolic portrait of the Spy underwent considerable change and largely lost its inner meaning.

Furthermore, Paris is resolutely kept as the intellectual centre of the work throughout, and the original dating scheme announced in the first volume was always adhered to, although nothing would have been easier than to change both.

We know that the aim of the work was to form part of *L'Histoire du Roi* and this aim is maintained throughout all the volumes. Also, throughout, the manipulation of opinions remained hesitant. For instance, no English writer would have needed to be pussy-footed about the Jesuits or other religious orders. Marana has to keep on contradicting himself in order to avoid censorship and persecution on the grounds of religious unorthodoxy.

Jan Luvick of the University of Prague has been studying the Eastern European and Turco-Hungarian material in *The Spy*. He believes that at least part of the correspondence is a genuine one which may have been deployed by Marana. Also, Luvick's analysis of the Eastern European material reveals how extremely well informed the author was, and again shows the use of sources not available in England. Once more we are far away from the Grub Street world of Bradshaw and Midgeley. To suppose that an English-speaking author, working in London, would have been able to deploy such a quantity of research material seems highly implausible.

There is absolutely no proof that Marana retired in melancholy in 1689. There is plenty of evidence, however, to show that he was at work on a perky and humorous description of Parisian life around 1691-92. I know of no proof that he died in Venice in 1693. True, he lost his pension in 1691 as a result of the cutback in patronage, and he disappears from view after 1692. I incline to think possibly true: the rumour that he was assassinated.

Last, the Madoc material is by no means the only Celtic reference in *L'Esploratore*, and there is a striking one in the first volume of the manuscript (see *Stadi Secenteschi*, 1969, p.265). The principal source is *Livy*, Book 5, 34.

The distinguished editor of Tacitus, the late Guy Chilver, assured me that the material that Marana deploys is inaccurate, but added that what was interesting was not the accuracy, but the revelation of the state of knowledge of the subject in the late seventeenth century. His observation reveals much of the importance of *L'Esploratore* for the intellectual history of Europe.

DONALD A. WARREN.
Keynes College, The University, Canterbury, Kent.

Humphrey Jennings

Sir, — In his review (June 10) of Anthony W. Hodgkinson and Rodney E. Sheratsky's book *Humphrey Jennings*, Arthur Marwick says about *Spare Time* that "even this eighteen-minute documentary may not establish Jennings as an *auteur* since there are grounds for attributing much that was innovative about the film to its editor, Stewart McAllister." The point is a good one, but misplaced. Stewart McAllister is unlikely to have edited *Spare Time*, which is in any case not edited in a particularly striking way. McAllister did, however, edit many of Jennings's other films, and shared the directing credit with Jennings on the most famous of all, *Listen to Britain*. What McAllister did and didn't do is the subject of a forthcoming book by Dan Vaughan, entitled *Portrait of an Invisible Man: the working life of Stewart McAllister, film editor*, to be published by BFI Publishing this autumn.

Geoffrey Nowell-Smith.
British Film Institute, 81 Dean Street, London W1.

Preserving Facsimiles

Sir, — The Birmingham Shakespeare Library here owns a copy of the 1617 *Famous Victories of Henry the fifth* (London. Printed by Bernard Alsop). reproduced in facsimile by J. O. Halliwell (Phillips) in 1857. A note by him attributed to 1858 states "The negatives used destroyed and no perfect copies are preserved." W. Jaggard lists only one other copy of this book in the Library of Warwick Castle (now dispersed) and also notes that some of the pages are now illegible. The text of our copy is indeed slowly vanishing and it appears nothing can be done to preserve it. I should like to inquire from your readers whether anyone knows of the whereabouts of another copy — either in public or private hands — and, if so, what condition the text is in now and whether any measures have been taken to preserve it.

B. H. BAUMFIELD.
City of Birmingham, Public Libraries Department, Reference Library, Birmingham.

'Choreia'

Sir, — I am greatly surprised to find Richard Stoneman reviewing William Mullen's *Choreia: Pindar and Dance* (June 10), approving the author's "careful demonstration that a statistically significant proportion of the crucial events of the mythic narratives, as well as moral and religious... statements, receive extra emphasis from occurring in the epode, when the chorus was standing still".

HUGH LLOYD-JONES.
Christ Church, Oxford.

'The Hunt by Night'

Sir, — Many Fitzgerald's letter of support (June 17) for *The Hunt by Night* — the poems, not alas the painting — rests on poor foundations and neither a fan nor an anti-fan of her poet; I only know that he mangled some poems I care about. I wouldn't even have known, if one of the translators of *Poems 1913-1936* had not asked me to take this up. I am not "the translator of the passages" in question, only of a small part of them; as I thought my letter made quite plain. I gave page references so that readers could check for themselves, rather than just accept my opinion of the results. I'm sorry if this was terribly untraditional and unpoetic, but the poet could have avoided it if he had had the imagination to acknowledge his sources, which in this case are not dead pages but living *conférences* who have been crazy and devoted enough to do very difficult work so that a great writer may be represented properly.

What surprises me is that in a whole column of prose Mary Fitzgerald cannot put up any critical defence of what poet did with the material. He made "distinguished use" of it; that's all. Does she not realize what a desperate term of approval this is?

JOHN WILLETT.
Volta House, Windmill Hill, London NW3.

André Gide

Sir, — As the publisher of the *Selected Letters of André Gide and Dorothy Bussy* I was delighted to read Patrick Pollard's sympathetic review in your issue of June 10. However, I must point out that although our selection was edited, and Gide's letters translated, by Richard Tedeschi, the introduction was written by Jean Lambert, as the jacket, title-page, and introduction itself proclaim.

Jean Lambert prepared the French edition of the letters, and the remarks which Patrick Pollard attributes to "the editor" in the course of his review were written by him for the introduction in this selection.

JUDITH LUNA.
Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford.

The Land for all the Earth

Hyam Maccoby

W. D. DAVIES

The Territorial Dimension of Judaism
169pp. University of California
Press. £11.25.
0520 043316

Before the rise of the state of Israel, many Christians (who had outgrown the traditional Christian view that Judaism became fossilized on the advent of Jesus) would have given an account of the relationship of Judaism to the Land in something like the following terms. Judaism was once centred on the Temple and the Land, but after the destruction of the Temple and the expulsion from the Land, Judaism survived by turning the study and practice of the written and oral Law into a "portable Temple"; it became a non-territorial religion. The enthusiasm of the vast majority of Jews, religious as well as non-religious, for the revival of the Land as a geographical and political entity was thus a matter for amazement. Many were disappointed that Judaism had "reverted" to being a religion that was intimately concerned with "a piece of real estate". Others, however, began to be aware of the continuous historical connection of the Jews with their Land, even during the period of exile; of the messianic movements, for example, which from time to time had sought to restore the people and the religion to the Land.

Yet a characterization of Judaism as territorial in a simple way is fraught with difficulties. How, in fact, did it survive exile as no truly territorial religion has ever done? If the Torah became a "portable Temple" in conditions of exile, what was the role of Torah in a functioning Jewish

territorial state? How are we to reconcile the universalism of the Hebrew Bible, with its vision of world unity and peace, with an attachment to a particular land? These questions demand an account of the theology of the Land in Judaism, and an adequate answer would go far towards explaining the relationship between particularism and universalism in Judaism.

W. D. Davies has tackled this subject before in a large book (*The Gospel and the Land*, 1974), in which, however, he was mainly concerned to inquire what happened to the Jewish territorial dimension in Christianity. In the present book he looks further into the theology of the Land in Judaism itself. In so doing he has arrived at some new insights, and shows a broader sympathy with the standpoint of Judaism. Professor Davies rightly stresses that the subject has been neglected by European scholars, both Christian and Jewish, influenced by Enlightenment scorn for particularism; but that the post-Enlightenment era has revived a sense of the moral urgency and religious relevance of our custodianship of the lands in which we live, and thus rendered opportune a reassessment of the Jewish view of this custodianship.

Important as the Land is in Jewish religion, there are many factors that temper and limit this importance. The Land is never taken for granted as an eternal background, but always regarded as a gift that may be taken away. Over against the blessing of the Land are the ever-present concepts of the Desert and of Exile. The key text here is, "The land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me" (Leviticus 25: 23). Yet this insecurity in relation to the Land should not be overstressed. Davies combats ably the common view that Judaism is basically a religion of nomads (this was urged by

the proto-Nazi historian Werner Sombart). A third of the Mishnah, the compendium of Jewish law, relates to the cultivation of the Land, and it is moving to consider how these agricultural laws have been faithfully studied throughout the ages by Jews exiled in urban ghettos, cut off from the sights and sounds of agriculture and nature. The Rechabites were a tiny, untypical group. Withdrawal into the desert as a form of spiritual renewal (eg Elijah, the Qumran sect, John the Baptist, Jesus) was always a prelude to a revived return to the Land. The desert (Davies points out) was the region of grace; but Judaism regards grace as a prelude to a programme of works, which can be performed only in the Land. There were no holy places in the desert, not even Sinai.

The Land, then, is important, but not all-important. It is the area marked out for the implementation of the Torah, but the Torah transcends the Land and remains even when the Land is lost, and the people go into exile. Recognizing this, Davies comes to the final conclusion, "Judaism is not a territorial religion: the Land is not of the essence." This may seem a surprising conclusion, in view of the vindication of the importance of the Land in Jewish theology, as expressed, not in abstract terms, but in the stories of the Bible and the rabbinic Hagagah, the prayers of the liturgy and the laws of the Halakha. But in the last resort, the Land is a goal of yearning rather than a material reality. Always associated with the idea of the Land is the idea of exile, even when the Land is occupied. Concepts of "the heavenly Jerusalem" make the Land a focus of Utopian aspirations and give it a universal meaning.

Just at this point, however, where the way is open to a characterization of the relation between particular and universal in Judaism, Davies's book,

excellent as it is, fails to achieve completeness. He is handicapped by the definition of "sacred space" with which he begins his argument: "To this belongs cosmos, order: outside it is chaos, where demons and alien spirits rule." But the special holiness of the Temple in Jerusalem did not imply chaos or unholiness in the Land outside it: on the contrary, it conferred holiness, though of a lesser order, on the whole Land. Similarly, the existence of a Holy Land (though the expression itself, as Davies points out, is not a Jewish one) confers holiness on the entire world. The Psalmist says, "The heavens are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men." The idea that the whole earth is a gift, for which all mankind (not just the Jews in their special Land) should show gratitude by their custodianship, is here expressed, as it is in the early chapters of Genesis. The Land, therefore, is a pilot project of this universal scheme, a centre of holiness from which holiness may spread throughout the earth. Davies, unfortunately, does not include this aspect in his study.

Similarly, there is a relationship between specialness and universalism in the Torah itself. Partly, it applies to the Land as a holy area; and partly, it is a universal code of morality for mankind. Here again Davies does not make necessary distinctions. He even argues that the biblical prohibition against murder arises from the holiness of the Land. "To shed blood was to handle what was sacred as though it were profane"—and thus to pollute the Land. But the Bible carefully states (Genesis 9: 6) that the prohibition against murder long preceded the giving of the Torah or even the existence of the Israelite nation. It was part of the primeval *his gentium* (or, as the rabbis called it, the Laws of the Sons of Noah), and thus belonged to universal moral law, not the law of

holiness. Here, I think, Davies has been over-influenced by recent structuralist theories, which have reinforced old stereotypes about Judaism as a religion in which morality is dissolved into ritual. The Torah was the special covenant of Israel and the holiness code of the Land. Its special snobbishness and festivals and ritual purity was intended to apply to Jews only, but it prefigured other covenants that might be made by the rest of humanity. It was a sample document, not a universal code; it did not seek to bind other nations or to exclude their own spiritual efforts. Judaism offered a universal religion, but not a universal church. It was both menetheistic and pluralistic.

The Jews' religious attitude towards their Land thus offers a model of how every nation should regard its land. By its very particularism, it points to an intimate relationship between humanity and that "piece of real estate", the planet Earth. It points away from false Gnostic spirituality, with its scorn of earthly existence.

We should be grateful to W. D. Davies for opening up a neglected topic. He illustrates his theme from a deep knowledge of Bible and rabbinic Hagagah material. He is less a home, however, in the Halakic (legal) material, where he is liable to misunderstandings (for example, he misrepresents a passage in the Mishnah about whether thieves should be put to death as an attempt to discourage emigration by imposing taxes on those outside the Land; the real point is whether Syria, having formed part of David's conquests, should be regarded as inside the Land; the answer, incidentally, was "No"). It is to be hoped that this deeply interesting book will stimulate further work and lead to increased appreciation of the subtle intermixture of the universal and the particular in Judaism.

Ancestral appreciations

Nikolai Tolstoy

PETER USTINOV

My Russia
224pp. Macmillan. £10.85.
0333 34129 5

My Russia is a remarkable book, a work to be read on many levels, and one which arouses intriguing questions. Peter Ustinov begins disarmingly by confessing that "the title of this book is the Publisher's". With a frank disclaimer, his pretentiousness he goes on to imply that the rest of the book is his. Now, without wishing to appear sceptical, I find it hard to believe this. Is Mr Ustinov's favourite game of pulling the public's leg? A prefatory passage describes him as possessing a "long line of Russian ancestry... life-long interest in the country and... great genius as a writer". Could such a man have written the work we have here?

First, it would seem that more than one person's hand is detectable behind the text. On page 44, for example, we are told that "Tsar Alexander I in 1825 'vanished incognito into a monastery', but on page 97 instead that he died that year. It is not possible for one person to hold these contradictory views simultaneously.

Second, no one with such bereditary qualifications and personal attributes could have committed a title of the errors, historical and grammatical, which make *My Russia* a candidate for the *Guinness Book of Records*. It would require another book of similar length to list all these,

so a few examples must suffice. The author(s) believe(s) that pagan Russians worshipped a god named *Perun*; that the Great Princes of Moscow after Rurik claimed the title of "Tsar"; that the founder of the Rurikids bore the unusual name of *Hazbek*; that the *Orpikhino* was a code of laws; that Napoleon was a "Proconsul"; that Russia once occupied Hawaii; that Spain has been "contained comfortably within the Iberian peninsula" since the Moorish expulsion; that there was an "alliance between Russia and Turkey during the Crimean War"; that Rasputin was a monk; that the German Government was not responsible for Lenin's journey to Petrograd in 1917; that Hitler believed himself to be the heir of the Roman emperors;... the tedious catalogue may fittingly close with the discovery of a Red Army luminary named *Marshall Madzinsky*.

What can have been the source-material for this wonderful farra? At first the idea occurred that some hard-pressed and underpaid amanuensis had culled it all in haste from an encyclopedia. But what encyclopedia would describe the eventful years between 1721 and 1762 in these memorable words: "During a smattering of short, characterless reigns, Peter II and Peter III passed in and out of sight like the saints of a Cathedral clock, to be followed by Anne, Peter the Great's niece, and then later thereafter by his daughter, Elizabeth?"

My preliminary assumption is that the research work was apportioned out to a number of volunteers, whose unabashed ignorance of even the most general outlines of Russian history

was perhaps compensated by a correspondingly modest expectation of financial reward. After that, their potpourri of amazing "facts" was moulded into shape by a triumvirate of ghost-writers.

The first of these was an expansively orotund club bore, who has a *bon mot* and misquotation for every occasion, and whose go down the remotest parts of the English countryside. For every historical character he has an amusing little legend, based in homely fashion on personalities familiar to his daily round. Sometimes he startles his admiring audience with a phrase in some exotic language such as French. Who among us is likely to realize that *nostalgie de la boue* does not mean "a strange craving for the depths"? It is this amiable character, perfectly content with the modest setting of his triumphs, who explains to his wide-eyed listeners that Pushkin's poetry is read more by Russians than by foreigners, that "Dostoevsky was a writer of undoubted greatness" (though not "great genius"), alas, and that Tchaikovsky really did possess "more than competent musical technique".

But no sooner has this avuncular figure shuffled out of the editorial office than a much less likeable fellow slides in. Angular, peevish, and endlessly wiping a drip from the end of his nose, he in contrast appears to hate everyone. He scorns Poles, who so ungratefully resent sacrificing their independence to Russia's legitimately endless search for "security". He dislikes the English, who have no conception of the Russian "soul". He

appears to feel little sympathy with Jews, whose bloody-mindedness is castigated at the most improbable junctures. But above all he is obsessive about Americans, who display ridiculous concern with what they "glibly" term "freedom", criticize humane institutions like the Berlin Wall, continually harp on absurd conceptions like democracy and the rule of law, and persecute noble-minded idealists like Anthony Blunt (who, as he is referred to as "venerable" in the 1930s, must have been antediluvian at the time of his recent exposure). President Reagan is held up to particular opprobrium, rather oddly on the grounds of possessing a "pale, slender shadow". One would like to learn more of this unusual adjunct.

The third figure of the triumvirate is a little tired, as he has flown in from that large building tourists glimpse as they speed through Dzerzhinsky Square. It is his task to see that the book accords with received Soviet Historical teaching. For, if there is one consistent theme running through this wonderful book, it is its absolute fidelity to Party dogma. It is not just that it consists of a sustained apologia for Bolshevism, in which all preceding history (in bare list of the text) is shown as inexorably leading to the crowning edifice of the October Revolution. It is that it scrupulously follows every bypath of ideological interpretation; in which "facts" are but bricks to be hacked into suitable shape. Thus it is stated that the Allied intervention in Northern Russia in 1918 was partially motivated by a desire to avenge the murder of the Tsar. As the Tsar was murdered in August and the British had arrived at Murmansk in March, it is hard to see how this can be so; particularly as their presence has been authorized by no less a person than Trotsky.

This author has perfectly encapsulated current Soviet thinking on Stalin and Khrushchev. The former has precisely the "correct" degree of rehabilitation as great war-leader and

architect of industrialization, with some compensatory glances at "excesses" involving a few thousand people at most. There is no indication that the NKVD or KGB ever existed, and only an oblique allusion to the Gulag. We are assured that "freedom of thought is possible anywhere, in prison, in labour camps... No power on earth has yet managed to eradicate this right." That's the way it was in Kolyma.

The book seems to have been written before Mr Andropov's accession, but we are given a sketch of his predecessor Mr Brezhnev, with a brief rhapsody over "the cool, dispassionate pools of his eyes". Finally, the book ends on a sternly correct note, with an approving quotation from the Great Friend and Leader of Mankind: "no less on authority than Joseph Stalin".

Where does Mr Ustinov come into all this? A photograph on the dust-jacket shows a sleek, jovial figure lounging near what appears to be the restaurant area of the Nevsky Prospekt. What is he smiling about? Turning the page, one finds on the inside flap these frank words, which at least must be from the pen of Mr Ustinov himself:

I am neither red nor white, in fact I am not Russian at all. In the way such things are understood by Customs and Excise... The fact remains that the greatest literary success of my unfinished life has been achieved in Russia, and a play dismissed as an amusing pot-boiler in the West has been running for years over there.

Yes, the Soviets are not the simpletons they appear in "the undarned symmetry of Mr Reagan's vision of the world". One recalls the visit of a German socialist playwright to Leningrad in 1924. As David Canto wrote in his book *The Fellow-Travelers*, "By the kind of coincidence which became a habit, Toller's play, *Hinkunnon*, happened to be in performance in Leningrad during his visit." It is certainly pleasant to be appreciated.

The prosody of fate

David McDuff

PETER FRANCE

Poets of Modern Russia
204pp. Cambridge University Press.
£6 (paperback, £7.50).
0521 23490 5

BORIS PASTERNAK

My Sister-Life and A Sublime Melody
Translated by Mark Rüdman and Bobban Beychuk
134pp. Ann Arbor: Ardis. \$16.50 (paperback, \$7.50).
08223 784

Selected Poems
Translated by Jen Stallworthy and Peter France
160pp. Algeo Lane. £7.50.
07159 1497 1

Russian poetry has attracted considerable interest in the English-speaking world over the past decade or so; yet surprisingly few full-length critical studies of the subject have been published during the same period. Literary concern seems to have been focused principally on the areas of translation and biography. Indeed, in a few exceptions such as the distinguished studies of O. M. Hughes, Henry Clifford, John Bayley and Ronald Hingley, there have been no major contributions in the field since the publication of Renato Poggioli's *The Poets of Russia* in 1960. It may be said that the stranglehold on literary scholarship within the Soviet Union and the apparent reluctance of émigré critics to tackle the larger questions of the Russian poetic tradition have left Western observers feeling deprived of pertinent and unqualified to pass comment. Another reason for the general silence may be the uniqueness of the poetry itself, which often seems to be a matter of style and technique rather than of some organically determined relation between sound and spirit, word and human fate.

Peter France's excursion into this "unfamiliar territory" is a bold one. He does not claim to be a specialist, and one wishes that it could have been more successful. Professor France sets himself the task of giving the reader of English a critical account of the work of nine modern Russian poets: Blok, Akhmatova, Pasternak, Mandelstam, Tsvetayeva, Mayakovsky, Voznesensky, Brodsky and Algi. The first six of these receive a chapter each, while the last three are discussed together under the heading "Poets of Today". The book is prefaced by a chapter on the Russian poetic tradition, with brief discussions of Lomonosov, Derzhavin, Pushkin, Tyutchev, Lermontov, and an even briefer account of Symonov, Annenkov and Futurism. France's treatment of his material suffers from what seems to be an uneasy compromise between a desire for encyclopedic inclusiveness on the one hand, and for critical focus on the other. The book's structure is uneven: while the four chapters on the famous "quartet" of Mandelstam, Pasternak, Akhmatova and Tsvetayeva have a certain formal unity and coherence, the introductory "scene-setting" chapter, and those on Blok, Mayakovsky and the "poets of today" have the unfortunate appearance of being artificially tacked on for discussion to these chapters. France's choice of poets seems arbitrary, to say the least: why, for example, in a work devoted to modern Russian poetry, do we have a whole chapter on Mayakovsky, and yet only the barest mention of Annenkov, Sologub, Bely, Khodasevich? Such omissions lessen the book's value as a guide to its subject, for the general reader just as much as for the student of Russian literature.

The author's inattention upon textual criticism is praiseworthy, and many of his poem-analyses (with Russian text and English translations) are very useful. This critical rigour is, however, marred by an occasional tendency to wander away from the point into remarks that are either offhand and (unintentionally?) presumptuous (see, for example, that there is in Tsvetayeva's poems "a propensity to work in myths - or at worst clichés - of human behaviour; and this can become unbearable at times"), or oddly patronizing (of Pasternak's poetic vision we read that "maybe there is something magical in the belief that such experience can really be communicated, but with Pasternak it often seems to work as much as it ever can"). Above all, what one misses in this volume is any serious attempt to draw all the various strands together, to show, for instance, the high degree of interconnectedness between the

members of the "quartet" and the nature of the values that united them against the "wolf-fanged age" of political and spiritual oppression.

Among the numerous translations of Russian poetry that have appeared during recent years, new versions of Pasternak have been conspicuously absent. To some extent, this has been the effect of fashion: the Pasternak vogue of the late 1950s to the mid-1960s gave way during the 1970s to a growing interest in Osip Mandelstam's poetry and prose. The poetry of Pasternak is if anything less easy to translate than that of Mandelstam. This is not merely because of its richness and density of imagery; the poetic persona of the most mysterious member of the "quartet", difficult enough to grasp even in Russian, tends in translation to become opaque. Certainly, early English and American versions of Pasternak did little to bring readers close to the austere discipline and phenomenological exactitude of this intensely metaphysical art. Mark Rüdman and Bobban Beychuk's versions of the early *My Sister-Life* and *A Sublime Melody* do not in my view come to terms with Pasternak's world. Ignoring its formal principles for the most part, they achieve a result which sounds tongue-tied and pedantic.

And gardens, and ponds, and fences, even the white heat of creation, are just eruptions of passion accumulated by the human heart.

Compare this with Jon Stallworthy and Peter France's much more accurate and fluent

And gardens, and ponds, and fences, and the galaxies howling at large Are only the currents of passion That human hearts discharge.

Jon Stallworthy and Peter France have come nearer than other translators to providing an English equivalent to Pasternak's "ontology of joy" (the phrase is Angela Livingstone's). They have preserved at least something of the rhythms and metres that rule this strictly organized poetic universe, and their voices, although at times perhaps a shade too polite, are often recognizably Pasternak's own. Their selection includes poems from all periods of the poet's life, and with its introduction and notes forms a guide to his work that is far in the best tradition of English have at their disposal.

Varieties of revelation

Anthony Phillips

JOHN ROGERSON (Editor)

Beginning Old Testament Study
157pp. SPCK. £3.95.
0281 03840 6

H. DARRELL LANCE

The Old Testament and the Archaeologist
98pp. SPCK. £4.95.
0281 04021 4

MICHAEL E. STONE

Scriptures, Sects and Visions: A profile of Judaism from Ezra to the Jewish Revolt
150pp. Blackwell. £8.50.
0 631 13008 X

No Old Testament teacher finds it easy to select the first reading list for his students - such is the complexity of current research. But here are three books which should all appear on such a list, the first covering methods of Old Testament study and the world of the Old Testament, the second, biblical archaeology and the third warning that the two faiths which treat the Hebrew scriptures as "sacred texts" derived from a much more complex religious background than those texts betray.

John Rogerson, the editor of *Beginning Old Testament Study*, describes his book as "a guide to how to approach the academic study of the Old Testament". It aims to help you over some of the first hurdles. He contributes chapters on the history of Old Testament study, Old Testament history and the history of Israel, the world-view of the Old Testament, and an excellent short epilogue on using the Old Testament - both in the Church and in social and moral questions. Conscious of the different spiritual backgrounds from which students come, he exhibits throughout a gentle pastoral touch which in no way blunts the sharpness of his essays.

The remaining contributions are by David Clines, on methods in Old Testament study; Paul Joyce on the individual and the community; and the

Old Testament and its relationship to the New Testament, and John Barton on Old Testament theology, and approaches to ethics in the Old Testament. While Clines's essay is somewhat idiosyncratic ("a deliberate re-evaluation of current methods"), Joyce on responsibility and Barton on ethics successfully popularize their own important research. But the beginner may with justification feel that the latter's magisterial essay on the problems of a theology of the Old Testament take him well beyond "the first hurdles". Oddly there is no discussion of archaeology nor is the student reminded that rabbinic Judaism provides an alternative interpretation of the Hebrew scriptures to that of the New Testament. Such issues are taken up in the other two books under review.

H. Darrell Lance's introduction to Biblical archaeology, *The Old Testament and the Archaeologist*, is a model of how a complicated and controversial subject can be presented to the layman leaving him not just informed but excited. This is achieved by getting him to do archaeology for himself by unfolding through excellent diagrams the appropriate methodology of excavation. Careful to stress the "implications" of his discipline, the author explains the interdependence of principles of stratigraphy and typology upon which his craft is based. Emphasis is placed on those major concepts which the reader needs to understand in order to interpret archaeological reports and evaluate them critically. Ultimately the test of their reliability must be the ability to reconstruct from the publication alone "the stratigraphic context from which a particular find was recovered".

After usefully listing the major sources of bibliography for work on Palestinian archaeology, Lance points out that the chief abuse committed by biblical archaeologists (whether Christian exegetes or Israel secularists) has been their over-hasty desire to connect archaeological evidence to the biblical account. Here he might have gone on to discuss the widespread unscientific harmonization of non-Israelite archaeological material, connecting principles found at different

times and places throughout the ancient Near East with alleged similar practices reflected in the Old Testament, which has particularly bedevilled the study of the patriarchal and early settlement periods. Yet in a careful analysis of eighty years' work on the sites of Gezer, Megiddo and Hazor, the author shows that the archaeological cannot remain on the sceptical sidelines but must, using the evidence available, produce the best possible hypothesis knowing full well that further discovery or subsequent reinterpretation of the published material may lead to its later

modification. Otherwise the enormous expenditure in energy and finance would be irrelevant for biblical research. The archaeologist is then in no different position from other biblical scholars.

Archaeology plays a major part in Michael E. Stone's *Scriptures, Sects and Visions*. In particular in the findings at Qumran and Nag Hammadi. While both Christianity and rabbinic Judaism have interpreted the historical situation of the Judaism out of which they developed in terms of their own traditions, these and other finds indicate that the situation was

Again Love Has Ended

Again love has ended, like a successful citrus season,
Or like a season's excavations which unearthed
Troubled things that wanted to be forgotten.

Again love has ended. After they've demolished
A big house and cleared the debris, you stand
On the square and empty air and say: what a small
Area the house stood on
With all the storeys and people.

And from the distance of the valleys came
The sound of a solitary tractor at work
And from the distance of the past the sound of the fork
Clattering on the china dish
Mixing and whipping the egg-white with sugar for the child
Clattering and clattering.

Yehuda Amichai

Translated by Tudor Parfitt and Glenda Abramson

much more complex. As the author points out, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has disclosed "a type of Judaism whose existence no one guessed".

Stone is particularly concerned with the "dark ages" of the fourth and third centuries ac. In the first and last parts of the Book of Enoch, presented as apocalypses, he finds a rich realm of speculation and "sacred reason", and suggests that the rabbis, the only Daniel of the apocalypses, were acceptable to the Bible was that alone showed no interest in such speculative matters. This has led biblical scholars to see a same eschatological emphasis as characteristic of Jewish apocalyptic, even though both before and after the Maccabean revolt it contained speculative material not present in the biblical tradition. Nelson's orthodoxy of rabbinic Judaism and Christianity can be used to judge the position of Judaism in the period of the second Temple. Both the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gnostic texts from Nag Hammadi have provided details of points of view which before the discovery would never have been considered "Jewish". Indeed, in many ways, one now speak of a "normative Judaism" in this period.

For Jew and Christian, Michael E. Stone has provided a valuable guide to the complex issues of their origins. Not the least of its merits is that it shows both against a simplistic attitude to their own and each other's faith.

Jacob Neusner's *Ancient Israel and Calistophorus: The Religious View of the Mishnah* (Princeton: University Press of the UK by Charlottesville, 1979) is distributed in the UK by TABS. £7.95, 0 8139 0866 3. It contains the Richard Leighton work on the subject of Jewish law, which they explain how the Roman conquest of the wars against their Roman conquerors in the first two centuries reconstructed their calendar through the Mishnah is a sacred way of life - one equally applicable to all defeated peoples.

Advancing south-eastwards

George Holmes

MICHAEL J. BENNETT

Community, Class and Careerism: Cheshire and Lancashire society in the age of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. 286pp. Cambridge University Press. £28.50. 0 521 24744 6

County history has been a fashionable activity of Tudor and Stuart historians for some time and has even nurtured a "provincial" interpretation of the Civil War. Historians of the preceding period have fought shy of it, deterred no doubt by the greater difficulty of the sources. But there is a lot of difficult material waiting to be explored and researchers are beginning to be attracted to it. With the publication of Michael J. Bennett's book, on the heels of Nigel Saul's study of the Gloucestershire gentry, late medieval provincial history seems at last to be taking off.

Mr Bennett's province is not a county. He defines as "the Northwest" the lowlands of Cheshire and South Lancashire enclosed by uplands, from the Welsh hills round to the Lake District. The coherence of his subject, defended in terms of social history, is assisted by the linked political destinies of the two palatinates of Chester and Lancaster in the reigns of Richard II and Henry IV at the heart of his period. The ruling class of his area is helpfully symbolized in two gatherings of the early fifteenth century. In 1412, sixty Cheshire knights and gentry met at Macclesfield to witness the settlement of a property dispute between two of their number, Sir Robert Grosvenor and Robert Legh. In 1414, a similar group of thirty-eight are recorded as attending the election of knights of the shire at Lancaster.

These groups represented substantial proportions of the county communities, the major lineages of the

gentry who intermarried, quarrelled and held most of the land in the North-West. This was a gentry province *par excellence*; without dominant magnates – unlike say Warwickshire or Sussex – and without very great ecclesiastical foundations. In Chester the king held the little land in demesne. Three-quarters of the manors were held by resident gentry, leaving only a quarter to king, church and nobility. The Stanley family, whose rise to pre-eminence changed the political structure of Lancashire later in the fifteenth century, was descended from a Cheshire soldier of fortune of the late fourteenth century.

The paradox which emerges from Bennett's book is that the offspring of this remote, poor and inbred society – dispensations for consanguineous marriage were exceptionally common – were so successful in exploiting the opportunities for profit and advancement offered to them by the great institutions of South-Eastern England. Bennett devotes a large, and in many ways the most original, part of his book to the fortunes of North-Westerners abroad. He gives us not only a picture of a region but also a study of social mobility and social promotion in late medieval society. Some penetration of North-Westerners into the London trades and aldermanic class can be observed in the first half of the fifteenth century. But their exploitation of the Church was more striking. The biggest success story was that of Robert Hallum, rising from a modest background in the borough of Warrington, through Oxford canon law to the see of Salisbury where he introduced six fellow-North-Westerners to canopies between 1408 and 1416. The bureaucrats of the Black Prince and John of Gaunt also provided ladders of advancement for clerks. It is impossible to quantify the results of the case-studies of many lesser men supplied by Bennett but it looks as though there was a considerable net export of talent to lucrative benefices and offices outside the North-West.

The success of the North-Westerners as soldiers is not altogether news: the Cheshire archers of the Black Prince and Richard II are well known. Readers are less likely to be aware that famous captains like Sir Robert Knolles and Sir Hugh Calveley, who made famous fortunes, also came from this part of the world. More important, Bennett reminds us that for long periods in the reigns of Edward III, Richard II and Henry V many hundreds of humble men from Cheshire and Lancashire were drawing the king's wages and coming home richer. He makes a good case for the view that the importance of the region as a recruiting ground produced an inflow of money. Regional study is the key to the old problem of the social and economic effects of the Hundred Years War. The North-West, economically poor, rich in potential soldiers, was a frontier area which did well out of the war by selling its manpower for the proceeds of taxation in the soft South-East.

Bennett's book illustrates the limitations of regional history too. His area lacks the estate records produced by great corporations, so his economic history is sketchy. Above all there is the pervasive problem of giving flesh and blood to the dry bones of men known only from perfunctory entries in the records. He has tried to give a touch of romantic life to his subject by using Sir Gawain, written in the dialect of this region, in his subtitle and by postulating an origin for it among the Cheshire servants of Richard II. This is speculation. The connection between that sophisticated and ironical poem and the society which he describes remains in fact as obscure as it was before. The whole, flourishing North-Western school of alliterative poetry is obstinately detached from the soil where its roots ought to be traceable.

It is very difficult to bring fourteenth-century regional society to life. Within the inevitable limitations, however, Bennett has written an enterprising and painstaking book which makes the outlines of medieval English society clearer.



A woodcut reproduced from a copy of the first English edition of *Conrad Gesner's The Newe Jewell of Health* which was offered for sale at Sotheby's Book and Manuscript Department on June 30.

Probing the parchment

M. T. Clanchy

G. O. SAYLES

Scripta Diversa

371pp. Hambledon Press.

35, Gloucester Avenue, London,

NW1 6ZJ.

0 907628 12 5

Medievalists studying in the Public Record Office will be familiar with categories of documents described as "Miscellaneous" of the Chancery or of the Exchequer: assortments of parchments bundled together by some archivist of an earlier century after a bag had burst in the Westminster Chapter House or a rat had gnawed through a file at the Tower of London. The diversity and incompleteness of such documents adds to their interest, for here the researcher may pull out the plum or at least learn something new. Over a lifetime of scholarship G. O. Sayles has spent many productive hours in the Public Record Office and in *Scripta Diversa* he has put together his own bundle of "Miscellaneous" comprising photographic reprints of articles published between 1928 and 1981 together with an introductory essay entitled "Clio's Web".

In this Professor Sayles argues that history is as much a "science" as the natural sciences, although it is not "experimental" like chemistry but "observational" or "descriptive" like geology. The phenomena which the historian observes and describes are the written records of man's past. He must therefore go back constantly to the sources and master the technical problems which they present: in understanding paleography, diplomatic and languages. Unlike the deacon professors who stop going to archives once their reputation is established, Sayles has always found time for the minutiae of medieval parchments. "To read documents that have not been read, much less studied, since they were written six hundred years or more ago has always had for me an irresistible fascination," he explains in his foreword.

His twenty-four reprinted articles share a uniformity of method rather than theme. Sayles likes to take a point of detail and publish a hitherto unknown document about it. To many cases both the document and his comments are brief. An exception, in not being medieval and in covering fifty-four printed pages, is a lively description of the Irish parliament of 1782 which Sayles discovered in the Huntington Library. This combines his interests in parliamentary history and the English ascendancy in Ireland. Seven of the other articles likewise concern Ireland, mainly in the fourteenth century. Among these is a characteristically epistolary suggestion that the *Medieval Parliament* ("How to Hold Parliament") was produced for Irish consumption in Richard II's reign and not in England. In Edward I's

The collection of articles as a whole leaves an impression of work in progress. They have not been consistently revised and some are fragmentary in the first place. A facsimile of part of the treatise *Pipum*, made with Llywelyn in 1265, is printed with no explanation whatsoever. Among the briefest articles are two concerning Scotland: a dubious charter of Alexander II and a letter from a bishop of Glasgow cited in a plea roll of the King's Bench. The rest of the King's interest in English law and government in the later Middle Ages. There are three articles on Richard II, for example, and the recent flood of unusually early law reading in English, a fragment of a commentary on *Magna Carta* dating from c. 1450.

Although Sayles was brought up in Scotland and spent his academic years in Glasgow, Belfast and Aberdeen, the noblest prospect he ever sees is the high road that leads him to England, to the Public Record Office and to the history of English law. "We are proud and rightly proud," he tells the *Scripta Diversa* in 1959, "when we recall what the common law of England has meant not only to us here but to four-fifths of the Commonwealth and the United States." This observation goes beyond "descriptive science" and reveals Sayles's preferences for the English. He is not the Scots (who are indifferent to the common law) or the Irish (whom Anglo-Norman law refused to protect).

His inaugural lecture to Aberdeen in 1953 engages in some English historians in fighting by caricature that eminent if Aberdeenian view. Stubbs. Even if an English bishop and the Oxford professor under attack, the root cause of Stubbs's decline has not been Sayles but a long-term change of fashion. In 1924, before Sayles had published his first article, "The Household of the Chancery", Ellen Power's *Medieval People* was arguing for what she called the "new history". This was to be concerned with Europe rather than England, culture rather than institutions, and peasants rather than lords.

On this divide Sayles stands as much for the "old history" as Stubbs did. Both take the superiority of English institutions for granted and think their development to be of paramount historical significance. The *Medieval People* is a tour de force with the obvious flaw of a grand conception. In historical writing, Sayles cannot replace Stubbs because he is not inclined to systematize. He belongs rather to a longer tradition of specialists in England's records stretching back through Madoc and Prynn to Arthur Aspinde, who he dedicates this book. In this book he is studying the medieval plea rolls before the Spanish Armada.

OWEN GILL and BARBARA JACKSON

Adoption and Race: Black, Asian and mixed race children in white families. 151pp. Batsford/St Martin's Press, in association with British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering. Paperback, £6.55. 0 312 00495 8

After the British gave up their colonies in Africa they started to take their ideas about racial relations from the United States. Though the continuing immigration from the New Commonwealth made the transatlantic parallels seem closer, this was scarcely the main influence. The mounting discontent of Afro-Americans that lay behind the 1965 explosion in Watts and the riots of 1967 found its slogan in "Black Power" and generated a multitude of organizations aiming to foster black consciousness. While that movement spread round the world, "consciousness-raising" projects were adopted by women's groups, "gay" and other minorities out to "improve" their standing. This would have affected British perceptions of people of South Asian, African and West Indian origin whatever their numbers.

After the Second World War it was the general practice in Britain and the United States to refer to people of ultimately African or Asian origin as "coloured". In Britain this was the more accurate description since many of those so designated were of light-brown complexion, but in both Britain and the United States this adjective was preferred because "black" seemed harsh and insulting. "Coloured" could therefore be a euphemism which accepted the assumption that the darker the complexion the greater the misfortune. When Afro-Americans adopted "black" as a self-designation it was as an insult and challenged the assumption that one shade of skin colour was better than another. The polarization of the black-white distinction enabled blacks to exploit the uncertainties of whites who felt guilty about racial inequality and, since it increased the sense of a potential threat to white society, it gave black representatives greater bargaining power.

The change in nomenclature did not affect the mode of racial classification in the United States, but the adoption of the new descriptions in the different circumstances of British society had much more extensive implications which have not hitherto attracted the attention they merit. One of the consequences of the study of racial relations is the contrast between the pattern described for the Deep South of the United States and that for northern Britain. The American model was particularly strong. Following upon a visit to London by Malcolm X, a Trinidadian called Michael de Freitas declared himself a Muslim and adopted the name Michael X. In January 1965 he founded the Racial Adjustment Action Society, which declared as the first of its aims "to unify all coloured persons in the United Kingdom". Throughout its constitution it referred to "coloured people", though in a pamphlet *What is RAAAS?*, printed shortly afterwards, can be found the words, "We are the only militant black organisation in Britain". It was not necessary to state explicitly whether Asians were to be considered black. The first unambiguous statement to this effect that I remember was contained in the address on "Immigrant Organizations" delivered to the 1968 Institute of Race Relations conference by Professor Michael Duménil; this address represented the British population as divided into white people and black people.

For many minority people in Britain today it is a matter of great importance that they should call themselves black and not be called "coloured". This can easily be understood, as can the readiness of many white people to meet their wishes. The change in terminology in the United States was associated with a movement to improve the status of an oppressed minority and a similar change in Britain was a means of placing a person in the black category. Someone who scores many points for wealth, education and occupation establishes a claim to

By class and by complexion

Michael Banton

designations acceptable to the people to whom they are applied, the problem of nomenclature cannot be resolved by the techniques of the pollster. Preferences change, and a description that appeals to one generation may be rejected by the next. More fundamentally, it is necessary to question whether a classification of individuals, though appropriate in one sort of situation, is suitable for use in some other sort of situation. For when people are described as black or white this evokes ideas of expected or appropriate behaviour. It polarizes relations. Terminology may reflect a social structure but it also influences behaviour and it can add its contribution to the clutch of factors limiting the range of options open to individuals. There are circumstances in which the polarization of group relations can assist their future development by overcoming majority prejudices, and other circumstances in which polarization only reinforces it. What should have been discussed long ago is whether the overcoming of racial prejudice (which must usually mean the overcoming of white prejudices) is assisted more by describing all non-whites as black, or whether it is better to use a multiplicity of designations which recognize diversity and increases people's freedom of choice.

Just as, after 1965, the idiom of blackness crossed the Atlantic, so there was a change in the way that words racism and race were used. Prior to this time racism was defined in the dictionaries and textbooks as a doctrine or dogma asserting a connection between race (or physical characteristics) and mental or intellectual capacities as revealed in human cultures. By the end of the 1960s it was being used to denote a historical complex which comprehended attitudes, behaviour, shared beliefs and tacit assumptions. Prior to the mid-1960s liberals were busy trying to demonstrate that the pre-war racial doctrines were not only pernicious, but irrelevant to social organization. It was a mistake best banished to the museum of awful warnings. Some Afro-Americans had never been so sensitive to this issue and in an era of "black pride" it became respectable to contemplate racial pride as well.

The impact upon British linguistic practice of changes originating in the United States has now been illustrated in a modest and worthy study of transracial adoption in Britain, *Adoption and Race: Black, Asian and mixed race children in white families*. It may seem incongruous to relate a discussion of such general issues to an inquiry into the reactions of just forty-four children, but it is often in the social microcosm that the significant changes can best be seen. The individual welfare is, in the end, the best standard against which to test the evidence.

The American influence is apparent from the book's opening pages, where the authors review previous research into, and criticism of, transracial adoption, but the criticism is only of the adoption of Afro-American babies by white couples. The British study is of thirty-six coloured children adopted in the mid-1960s mostly by middle-class parents living in middle-class areas away from the more concentrated New Commonwealth settlements, plus "eight coloured children adopted by couples in which at least one adoptive parent could be counted as 'coloured'". The authors prefer to describe all non-white people as black "because it signifies the dignity of the black community". Referring to the policies adopted by the adoptive families, they write that "in all of the families no emphasis was placed on the child's cultural or racial origins". The idea that children have cultural origins should not pass unnoticed. It was echoed in a feature article on the subject in *The Guardian* for January 26, this year in which the person in charge of a South London adoption project was quoted as stressing "the right of every child to grow up in a family of similar racial and cultural origins". Not so long ago any suggestion that there was a white culture which was the special property of white people would have been stigmatized as racist.

British social scientists have constantly to refer to the findings of their United States colleagues, for they have been the pioneers in so many fields. But there are many distinctive minorities in the United States and it is important to select the most appropriate comparisons. New Commonwealth people in Britain are distinguished from the majority by their appearance, by – in varying degrees – cultural features like language and religion, and by the important consideration that they are nearly all first or second-generation settlers. Which minorities in the United States correspond most closely to them? Surely, it is the Hispanic-Americans, particularly the Puerto Ricans, since they are also in the main recent immigrants from Third World countries with lower levels of occupational skill. West Indian settlers in London have been illuminatingly compared with West Indian settlers in New York but the comparison only points up some of the differences between the West Indians and Afro-Americans. Afro-Caribbeans, have to contend with similar prejudices on the part of whites, but Afro-Americans have been in the United States for much longer than most of that country's other ethnic groups. To call children of Asian or "mixed race" origin in Britain "black" and to assume that the appropriate group with which to compare them is the Afro-American, says more about the research workers' assumptions concerning "race" than they realize. It is a bad example of what Robert Miles in his recent book *Racism and Migration* has assailed as "the race relations problematic".

The British Adoption Project of the mid-1960s is shown here to have been very successful. The coloured children were not isolated in their white families. They were able to relate effectively to peers and adults outside the family. They seemed to be doing slightly better academically than their peers. Owen Gill and Barbara Jackson, "can find little support for the criticism of transracial adoption which is based on the anticipated difficulties of the child". Describing their interviews, they say that the children "taught us that if we were prepared to be interested in the children for themselves and see adoption and racial background as simply one feature of their lives, then they would be forthcoming". They should have expected nothing else. It is also notable that none of the children used the adjective "black" to describe themselves, the most common words being "brown" and "coloured". It is as if they wanted to define themselves socially according to the circumstances of situations as they arose (which is what most of us do anyway).

Nevertheless Gill and Jackson have their reservations, especially about whether transracially adopted children brought up in white society will be able to relate to members of the black community. There is, apparently, little evidence that the children had "a positive sense of racial identity". But what is this racial identity and why should it be assumed that the child would be better off if they had one? The Nazis sought to cultivate a sense of racial identity in Germany, but for the most part such a sense is a characteristic of minorities who seek to develop solidarity in order to advance as a group the interests which they share as individuals in a multiracial society there will be people who feel that they do not fit neatly into any of the recognized identities available. If they want to adopt different identities in different situations, or to manage without any particular identity, surely the appropriate response is not "tut-tut" but "good luck to you".

This is not the authors' view. They write of "black children who have been made white in all but skin colour", who "have no contact with the black community" and whose "coping" mechanisms are "based on denying their racial background". These social workers, it seems, insist on assigning individuals to racial categories against their will. They have a romantic and quite unrealistic notion of a "black community" comprehending all non-

whites. The "community" in question has so little self-consciousness that it can maintain very few institutions with anything more than a religious or a narrow homeland-oriented basis. The authors believe that dignity resides in this black community rather than in the humanity of black individuals. And there is worse to come, for influenced by the United States literature, they declare that "The black community has every justification for seeing itself as a 'donor' of children for white couples. Such a perception can do little for the dignity and self-determination of that community. To have a system which through 'benign neglect' in effect systematically removes black children from black homes and places them in white homes without any traffic in the opposite direction can hardly be beneficial for the black community." This is totalitarian language. Like the South African scheme it subordinates the individual's interests to the maintenance of big brother's conception of where he or she fits into the system. Nowhere do the authors consider whether it is better for a dark-skinned child in an institutional home to stay there or to be brought up by adoptive parents of lighter complexion. Nor did any of the seven letters published in *The Guardian* identify this as the issue.

Perhaps the last word should be with one of the adoptive mothers who gently protested "If you are continually conscious of the child's race, you've never accepted the child as a person, have you?" Accepting children as persons is the most important virtue. Often they are not accepted as persons because of peoples' prejudices (and usually these are the opposite prejudices of those displayed by Gill and Jackson). To combat these prejudices it may sometimes be necessary to polarize issues, but this should be a last resort, a tactic employed only in the knowledge that it will have a variety of consequences, some of them unwelcome. The pre-1965 British vocabulary revealed a tendency on the part of white people to make moral judgments about other races on the basis of physical instead of moral criteria. This was, and is, to be deplored. But the problem will not be overcome by adopting the either/or nomenclature of the United States and by assuming that the most important thing about an individual is his or her race.

A 10th revised edition of *Penelope Hall's Social Services of England and Wales* has recently appeared under the editorship of John Mays, Anthony Forder and Olive Keidan (342pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul, Paperback, £5.95, 0 7100 0637 6). The work comprises nine principles sections: "an introduction" and concluding section "Towards an evaluation of the Welfare State", both by Anthony Forder; together with chapters on education, the employment services, income and need, housing, the health services, the personal social services and law as a social service.

THE SCIENTIFIC CONSENSUS AND RECENT BRITISH PHILOSOPHY

by Frany Mehta

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Rationalizing the Exchequer

Edward Miller

MARK BUCK

Politics, Finance and the Church in the Reign of Edward II. Walter Stapledon, Treasurer of England. 225pp. Cambridge University Press. £25. 0 521 25025 0

Mark Buck's study of the career of Walter Stapledon is of substantial interest. An Oxford scholar who, in 1308, became a bishop in the far South-West may not, at first sight, appear an exciting subject; and even his occasional forays into diplomacy, his role from time to time as one of Edward II's counsellors, and his somewhat intermittent tenure of the Treasurership in the period 1320-25 hardly promise much of dramatic interest. What mattered of course, was the time. The years when Stapledon was most active in Edward II's administration were those which culminated in the king's tyranny, his dethronement and, ultimately, in his murder. That they offered material for drama Marlowe demonstrated long ago and Stapledon's end, too, was dramatic. A victim of the king's enemies in 1326, as he fled for sanctuary the London mob dragged him from his horse at the north door of St Paul's and cut off his head with a broad-knife. He was the first bishop in England to be murdered since Thomas Becket a century and a half earlier.

If Stapledon's death attracted notice, his life is another matter. Like most medieval Englishmen little can be known directly about his personality, for relevant evidence has simply not come down to us. Further, as Dr Buck points out, his background is obscure and the chronicles of the time take little notice of him. A rounded portrait, therefore, is out of the question and licence in the record remains even when, as Buck has

indubitably done, every surviving scrap of evidence has been scrutinized. Some of these lacunae present intriguing puzzles. There seems to have been, for example, no real forwarding of the likelihood of his succession to the bishopric of Exeter, although his election may have reflected his local reputation as a scholar and an officer of the cathedral. Again, however, his appointment as Treasurer in 1320 "comes... as something out of the blue" and more than once he seems temporarily to have withdrawn from the political scene without obvious explanation. We must, in fact, be satisfied with what he has known: with something about Stapledon as a diocesan, as a benefactor of the University of Oxford and of his kinsfolk, and as the chief officer of the Exchequer between 1320 and 1325.

It is in this last capacity that he can best be known, for the Exchequer has been at all times a great generator of records; and Buck's study of Stapledon's rationalization of its jungle of parchment is an important contribution to the administrative and political history of the times. It embraces, in fact, Stapledon's contribution to the re-establishment of royal power after the destruction of Thomas of Lancaster and his allies in 1322. Their confiscated lands, under exchequer administration, provided much of the funds that sustained Edward II's tyranny; and the rationalization of exchequer records and processes was designed to augment them further. The extent of Stapledon's personal responsibility for these policies is hard to determine: the likely inspiration is perhaps more likely to have come from the Despencers, but he may well have devised the means of realizing it. He, he reaped the whirlwind.

In one chronicle's eyes the result was that Edward II became "the richest king that ever was in England" since the Conqueror, but through windfalls from "fortifications" and financial

exploitation rather than through any fiscal innovation. As an administrator, in fact, Stapledon looks as though he may have been a somewhat conventional man and conventional may well have been characteristic of him. He accepted the need to be a hard-working diocesan whenever that was possible; like many another bishop he left his mark in stone, for he was by far the largest contributor to the cathedral building fund and bought white lead and gold-leaf for its decoration when he happened to be in London. His endowment of Stapledon Hall in Oxford, too, while it followed a newer fashion, was a type of benefaction coming to enjoy a certain popularity.

Dr Buck has rather more reservations about some of Stapledon's financial and property dealings, even if the latter did not match those of the Despencers. The Despencers, however, displayed a ruthless lust for self-aggrandizement rare even among medieval noblemen, and it is perhaps better to compare Stapledon with his own kind. So compared he does not appear to have been a leader of money on the same scale as Edward II's chancellor, Robert Burnell; and the aid he got for himself and his family may well have been modest beside the acquisitions of his contemporary at Bath and Wells, John Droxford. Again, Stapledon looks a somewhat ordinary man, which makes his final tragedy all the harder to explain. No doubt the breakdown of political order in 1326 and the irrationality of the mob brought for much, but there is a possibility that the spark may have been provided by the allegation that it was on Stapledon's advice that the king instituted a judicial visitation of London in 1321. That justice might be exploited to the king's profit was a medieval tradition which might appeal to a rather conventional Treasurer. There can be no certainty on this matter: as a number of others, and by no means the least, virtue of Dr Buck's book is that it makes no attempt to thrust conclusions upon us.

Medievalists studying in the Public Record Office will be familiar with categories of documents described as "Miscellaneous" of the Chancery or of the Exchequer: assortments of parchments bundled together by some archivist of an earlier century after a bag had burst in the Westminster Chapter House or a rat had gnawed through a file at the Tower of London. The diversity and incompleteness of such documents adds to their interest, for here the researcher may pull out the plum or at least learn something new. Over a lifetime of scholarship G. O. Sayles has spent many productive hours in the Public Record Office and in *Scripta Diversa* he has put together his own bundle of "Miscellaneous" comprising photographic reprints of articles published between 1928 and 1981 together with an introductory essay entitled "Clio's Web".

In this Professor Sayles argues that history is as much a "science" as the natural sciences, although it is not "experimental" like chemistry but "observational" or "descriptive" like geology. The phenomena which the historian observes and describes are the written records of man's past. He must therefore go back constantly to the sources and master the technical problems which they present: in understanding paleography, diplomatic and languages. Unlike the deacon professors who stop going to archives once their reputation is established, Sayles has always found time for the minutiae of medieval parchments. "To read documents that have not been read, much less studied, since they were written six hundred years or more ago has always had for me an irresistible fascination," he explains in his foreword.

His twenty-four reprinted articles share a uniformity of method rather than theme. Sayles likes to take a point of detail and publish a hitherto unknown document about it. To many cases both the document and his comments are brief. An exception, in not being medieval and in covering fifty-four printed pages, is a lively description of the Irish parliament of 1782 which Sayles discovered in the Huntington Library. This combines his interests in parliamentary history and the English ascendancy in Ireland. Seven of the other articles likewise concern Ireland, mainly in the fourteenth century. Among these is a characteristically epistolary suggestion that the *Medieval Parliament* ("How to Hold Parliament") was produced for Irish consumption in Richard II's reign and not in England. In Edward I's

On this divide Sayles stands as much for the "old history" as Stubbs did. Both take the superiority of English institutions for granted and think their development to be of paramount historical significance. The *Medieval People* is a tour de force with the obvious flaw of a grand conception. In historical writing, Sayles cannot replace Stubbs because he is not inclined to systematize. He belongs rather to a longer tradition of specialists in England's records stretching back through Madoc and Prynn to Arthur Aspinde, who he dedicates this book. In this book he is studying the medieval plea rolls before the Spanish Armada.

Doing business with the Raj

Hugh Tinker

C. A. BAYLY

Rulers, Towns and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870 429pp. Cambridge University Press. £29.50. 0 521 22932 4

C. A. Bayly has moved on from his earlier study of the city of Allahabad to examine urban change from Delhi to Benares (roughly coinciding with the former United Provinces and present-day state of Uttar Pradesh) during the period when British rule was imposed, challenged and consolidated. He has moved from local to regional history and has investigated a wide range of sources. This impressive research yields a work of meticulous detail.

Dr Bayly's theme is the rise and decline of various groups of urban leaders - governmental, judicial, religious and of course commercial - and their relation to the changing patterns of trade, urban control, society and institutions. He examines the view expressed by earlier writers, many of whom were administrators, that urban development was part of the "fulfillment" of British rule in India. "The question of the concept of a 'Time of Troubles' throughout the

eighteenth century when the towns and cities declined, coinciding with the breakdown of the Mughal empire. He is loath to accept a direct connection between the imposition of British rule (which in successive stages extended up the Ganges plain towards the north-west) with the development of "modern" features in trade, industry and the urban layout, and rejects the contrast between the medieval or traditional and a "modern" period as embodying a false antithesis.

In claiming to reinterpret the conventional views of the century Bayly is less than convincing. The idea of a "Time of Troubles" insists upon making its impact upon his account of the Ganges plain in the earlier chapters, especially in the section entitled "Society and War". Several of the old-established forms of leadership were so much affected during this time as to be virtually destroyed. In the meantime, urban centres to the west of his area of study - the area most disturbed by successive waves of disturbance and violence - collapsed, on some did not recover. It is strikingly evident that towns in the east of the area, where British rule was imposed at the end of the eighteenth century, were full of energy, offering great opportunities to the new class of entrepreneurs now emerging as the major agents of change. The two towns where commercial development advanced most (according to Bayly's evidence) were Benares and

Mirzapur, ceded to the East India Company in the time of Warren Hastings.

In denying the opposition between Tradition and Modernity the author is surely hitting out at an Aunt Sally which was knocked over long ago. When the merchants of the Company began to do business with the Seths of Ahmedabad in the seventeenth century, they discovered a commercial and industrial network as sophisticated as any in contemporary England.

What is impressive about this work is not the enunciation of theoretical concepts but the elaboration of evidence. Seldom does one come upon a book so closely textured. Although it adds significantly to our knowledge of the minutiae of political and social history its principal contribution is in the economic field. The author demonstrates (following, as he observes, the trail blazed by Holden Furber) that the Company's role was not so much to innovate trade and industrial trends as to join in a kind of partnership with Indian business. New forms of Indian enterprise emerged because they were able to take advantage of the "rules of the game" laid down by the British; this emergence was not an explicit part of British policy.

However much one may agree about Tradition and Modernity as being more like Yin and Yang one cannot minimize the importance of the Great Revolt of

1857 as a watershed in the history of the cities of this area: obviously, for Delhi and Lucknow, but also for other regional centres such as Aligarh or Bareilly. For these cities, 1857 was the end of an era; in the disintegration of their ethos they saw the extinction of the old order. This hardly surfaces in Bayly's book. He does not even devote a separate chapter to this cataclysmic event, and it is not easy in these pages to piece together the story of 1857. His account of the Revolt is mainly assembled in the section of a chapter with the unexpected title of "Small Towns in the Political Economy". He has interesting comments on the impact of the Revolt upon commercial groups, whom he discerns as sticking to their position as middle men; "hedging their bets", as he puts it, rolling to the Raj only when it appeared that the Raj was winning. Although the principal leaders of the Revolt came from both the Muslim and the Hindu aristocracy - and similarly, those who rallied to the British included members of both communities - the author considers that an important consequence of the rising was the fostering of "the impression of general conflict on sectarian lines", thus promoting the inter-communal hostility which was to be a dominant feature of urban politics in UP thenceforward.

The post-Mutiny chapter ends rather inconspicuously at 1870, not a particular turning-point, for India or for this area. There is a good section on

the growth of Calcutta as a major industrial city, and a final section vaguely pointed at the period 1870-1920. Having begun with a survey of the whole social and economic structure in the mid-eighteenth century, the book ends with another rather flimsy tour d'horizon at the twentieth century.

To end this review on such a tetchy note is to do less than justice to this very substantial study. This is an important work, but it is not one that can be recommended to any but the specialist. It does not provide an overall view of urban change in north India for anyone more broadly interested in modern Indian history. In style, it belongs to what Peter Fleming writes on India: that is to say, in sections hardly a sentence goes by without the introduction of some technical Indian term. In Benares, several Barhais (betel-leaf growers and sellers) were incorporated into the 'moral community of the credible merchants'; they were allowed to cash *hundi* freely in the bazaar and could call on interest-free loans and arbitration from the prestigious Naupatti *mohajans* (p.407). It is refreshing to return to the old-style writing of economic history by such a writer. W. H. Moreland who, despite half a lifetime spent in UP, wrote his classic studies with a notable economy of Indian jargon-words.

Thracian and other debris

John A. C. Greppin

VLADIMIR I. GEORGIEV

Introduction to the History of the Indo-European Languages 424pp. Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. 6.12 leva.

This "English-language" book by Vladimir I. Georgiev is a revised version of the Italian edition of 1966 which was, in turn, a translation of the original Russian version of 1958. Georgiev is himself a man of some position in Bulgaria, being Professor of Linguistics at the University of Sofia, where he was first employed in 1931, a Balkan Wunderkind, and, for over a decade, the vice-president of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. He is one of those luminous products of post-1918 Vienna, where he studied along with many other students from Balkan lands great and small. As an Indo-Europeanist, he has maintained throughout his career, and in spite of the isolation imposed on a Bulgarian, a high level of visibility in the West. Accurately labelled as an adventurous spirit from early on, his work, especially in the Balkan and Anatolian languages, has been read, disseminated, denounced and applauded. In short, Georgiev has deeply influenced the thinking of all Indo-Europeanists, East and West.

The present book does not concentrate on the well-known and much studied Indo-European languages, but rather on the relics, the linguistic debris of dead cultures with little literature, some of which are known only through reconstruction. Georgiev's principal focus continues to be the extinct languages of the Balkans, the best known of which is Thracian, but which also include Dacian, Phrygian, Illyrian and Macedonian. Indeed, he endows these linguistic scraps with a substance far in

excess of the few remnants which exist. For Thracian, we have four inscriptions: two on gold rings, another repeated on each of four separate silver vessels, and a fourth on a vase discovered on the island of Samothrace. All are composed of only a few words. But we get other Thracian vocabulary from Greek authors: Aristotle tells us that the Thracian word for "wild bull" was *bólinthos*; Strabo that their word for "city" was *brla*, a statement repeated in the grammarian Stephanus of Byzantium and in Hesychius, the ancient Greek lexicographer. But the great bulk of Thracian vocabulary seems to be drawn from the few hundred Thracian place-names that have come down to us. The present-day Bulgarian city of river name Chernavoda, which is good Slavic stock for "Black Water", is taken to be a loan translation for the ancient Dacian city *Aksiopa*, at the mouth of the *Aksiros* River. And similarly we are told that the *Asama* River is to be translated "Rocky River" after Sanskrit *asman* "stone"; or that *Resos*, a Thracian king, had a name that actually means "king", after Latin *rex* or the *rix* of Caesar's Gaulic onomy Vercingetorix, and that the Thracian tribe called *Bebrukes* was really the "Beaver People", after Lithuanian *bėbrus*, English *beaver*.

Traditionally the Balkan tribes, some twenty in number and including Thracians, Gets, Dacians and Moesians, have been viewed as a linguistically homogeneous group, even though politically distinct. Georgiev's view differs; he sees the Thracians, who lived south of the Danube, as linguistically separate from the Dacians, who lived to the north. This conclusion is made on the basis of place-names, that magical criterion for Balkan linguists. The town name suffix *-dava* occurs almost entirely in Dacia (*Acidava*, *Buridava*), while names with *-bria* appear in Thrace proper (*Mesembria*, *Polybria*). Georgiev also argues that Dacian has

phonological laws quite different from those of Thracian, and draws his evidence from toponyms, proper names, and the vocabulary recorded by the Greek physician Dioscorides, who mentioned by name nearly forty Dacian plants. Georgiev is concerned too, with the origin of the Albanian language, dismissing the traditional view that it is an extension of an Illyrian dialect. Instead he sees a Dacian substratum in the Albanian vocabulary. The Dacian (fruit-growing?) area of Dardania is compared with Albanian *dardhe* "pear"; *mauth*, the Dacian word for "mulberry" (from Dioscorides IV.37) is noted in Albanian *man(d)* "mulberry". Other etymologies show parallels to the phonological laws that Georgiev establishes for Dacian. The evidence is sketchy but interesting.

In discussing the linguistic make-up of Europe before the arrival of the great literary languages like Greek and Latin, Georgiev dismisses the idea that inter-related but unattested "Old European" languages existed from the Pyrenees to the Caucasus. Rather, he tries to show that there was Indo-European penetration in the Balkans from at least the third millennium BC; and that the pre-Romance substratum in Romanian would be Dacian, an Indo-European language, rather than an unknown language curiously related to Basque or Georgian.

The trouble is that Georgiev asserts conclusions which, though possible, are somewhat beyond the scope and volume of his data. A scholar's leading edge, however, is not the conclusions he must accept, but the areas where disagreement is most heated. Georgiev continues to arouse scepticism, but his established contributions have been weighty, too. Many of our views about the ancient languages of the Balkans are due to ideas which he originated, or championed. His has been a mighty career, fraught with joyous controversy.

The whence of English

Charles R. Sleeth

EUGENE T. MALESKA

A Pleasure in Words 224pp. Hamish Hamilton. £6.50.

The title of this book promises its readers pleasure, and the dust-jacket calls it a "fun book", but one would expect Eugene T. Maleska, as a scholar with a Harvard doctorate, an educator, and for some time a teacher in (American) public schools, and universities, to be following the time-honoured tradition of instructing while entertaining, mixing *utile* with *delectabile*. One would be right. A large part of his book consists of a helpfully organized treatment of contributions made by various languages to present-day English vocabulary, with separate chapters allotted to Greek, Latin, French, "Imports from Spain and Italy", "Words from Everywhere", and "Our Anglo-Saxon Heritage". All this can give pleasure to any layman with normal curiosity, and is, besides, valuable for vocabulary building and for general awareness of the many linguistic-cultural streams confluent in today's English. I shall construct almost exclusively on the instructive aspect of this work. At the same time I must declare an interest, as chief etymologist for Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1961); Maleska has evidently drawn much of his information from the Webster's Third etymologies, and acknowledges the debt on page 184.

Unfortunately the accomplishment of his didactic intention is impaired by a number of several kinds. The least annoying kind consists of misprints, some more than a momentary glance will reveal. One or two are cited twice on p.11 for Greek *chilid*, thousands. *Antipodae* and *Antropes* on pp. 184-185 mispelled. In Webster's Third, where the correct forms *Antipodae* and *Antropes* are given, and on p.26 the wildly anachronistic attribution of the

Colossus of Rhodes to Charles (misprint for Chares) of Lindus. Most unfortunate of all is the misprint "person" for "persons" in definition e of *pantheon* on p.9, which mars what would otherwise be one of Maleska's most effective challenges to his readers to do some of their own thinking and have some of their own fun. Maleska owes his publisher a reprint for this one.

The responsibility is his, however, for another and more harmful category of blemishes, namely, distinctions missed or inadequately expressed in the lists of English words borrowed from Latin, pp.18-51. Thus *factum* (a compound noun of the "pick-pocket" type) and *quorum* (genitive plural) are listed without discrimination among Latin second declension neuter nouns in *-um* like *arctum* and *appannus* and other fourth declension nouns, and *corpus* and other third declension neuter nouns are similarly lost among second declension masculine nouns in *-us* like *alumnus*, as are first-person plural verb forms like *monemus*, the oblique *rebus*, and the Greek loanword *oecopus*, whose final constituent is a Latinized spelling of Greek *pois* "foot", plural *podas*. In both these cases an opportunity is lost to show why for some words it would be erroneous to use the Latin plural endings *-a* and *-i* in English. By contrast, the listing of Latin words ending in *-a* is almost a model of right procedure: most are first declension feminine nouns like *aitenna*, and in the list on p.37 "every neuter plural (*impudenda* and eight others) is clearly identified as such.

Even more seriously, Maleska too often uses language which conceals or defines the difference between borrowing of words, on the one hand, and true cognate relationship of words, on the other. In different languages belonging to the same family or subfamily, on the other, he grants, even a brief rundown of the Germanic Cognate Shift ("Germanic Law"), and a brief demonstration of the validity of unrecorded ancestral languages as guarantors of true cognate relationship between words in

various Germanic or Indo-European languages, might drive some readers away and spoil the fun for those who remained; but these considerations cannot justify such an out-right concentration as Maleska's listing of new (pl) among words "of Latin origin". The qualifying statement that this is a "mixed breed" is equally (inaccurate). There is a world of difference between *new*, which has been in the English language as long as the English language has existed, and the word-constituent *nov-*, meaning "new", which has been in English only since 1300 or thereabouts in a group of words all taken directly or indirectly from Latin, or the word constituent *neo-*, meaning "new" which (barring one rare word attested in the fourteenth century) has been in English only since the sixteenth century in a group of words all taken directly or indirectly from Greek. To be sure, English *new*, Latin *novus*, and Greek *neos* all have a true cognate relationship, since Latin and Greek are members of (different branches of) the Indo-European language family, to which English also belongs. But English *new* is not "of Latin origin"; the cognate, English *new*, Latin *novus*, and Greek *neos* are all equally of Indo-European origin; and Latin *novus* is in no sense ancestral to English *new*. Maleska, who knows about Indo-European and its branches (Chapter 8), must know this.

Misleading language of the same kind is used several times between pp.15 and 70: the instances include, but are not limited to, references to Latin *genus* and Greek *genos* (28), English *genus* and Latin *genus* (36), Latin *doctus* and Greek *dokein* (47), English *young* and Latin *juvenis* (49), and English *leaf* and Latin *liber* "book" (50).

On the whole, then, despite the valuable features mentioned earlier, it seems to me that Maleska in his treatment of etymologies and language relationships has conceded too much in the most uninformative potential reader, so that his book is fun for the incurious and only too likely to confirm them in mental laziness.

An end to autonomy

Terence Moore

ROY HARRIS (Editor)

Approaches to Language 181pp. Pergamon £10.50. 0 08 028916 X

It would be pleasing to be able to welcome *Approaches to Language*, a collection of papers from a multidisciplinary symposium of Oxford lectures, as a substantial contribution to cross-disciplinary contact. Instead the book unwittingly constitutes a warning. If each of the separate disciplines - philosophy, psychology, anthropology, linguistics - is not to baffle and nonplus, there needs to be a common problem which each addresses from its own standpoint. There needs to be, that is, not only the famous elephant, but also a resolute intention on the part of each investigator to learn more about the nature of elephants by attending to the observations of the others. In the case of *Approaches to Language*, the common theme outlined in the brief editorial foreword - "man's use of words" - seems very much an afterthought, and one which turns out to be so general as to border on the vacuous. The editor, Roy Harris's own paper for example, "Language and Speech", is largely about linguists' use and misuse of the semi-technical terms *speech* and *language*; it is a study of linguists' use of meta-words, of terminological confusion in the apparatus available for the description of language. Man's use of language itself is barely approached.

Yet, curiously, running through a number of the papers, it is possible to discern a quite separate theme of uncommon importance to anyone concerned with the workings of language and its relations to thought and to mental processes more generally. This theme is perhaps best summed up in a question: can linguistics be usefully considered as an autonomous discipline?

For many decades now, at least since the time of Ferdinand de Saussure, it has been the widely accepted wisdom among linguists that "the true and unique object of linguistics is language studied in and for itself". The result has been that linguistic research has largely concentrated upon what could be isolated for independent study: form, especially syntactic and phonological form, at the expense of what could not: meaning, and its related notions: reference, inference, paraphrase. What is particularly interesting about a number of papers in *Approaches to Language* is that, however obliquely, they challenge the assumption that language can usefully be treated as an object of independent study. They implicitly adopt a point of view that, in a recent book, Christine Carling and I have called epiphenomenalist. For the epiphenomenalist, language is seen as necessarily dependent upon the supportive framework of expectations, beliefs, knowledge and categorized experience of language-users. From this standpoint, tallying accounts of the character of language, and its workings are unlikely to emerge from approaches treating language as a self-contained system.

Alan Allport's paper here, "Language and Cognition", provides some interesting support for an epiphenomenalist approach to language. His general thesis is that human intelligence does not depend upon and thus can be functionally dissociated from - an individual's possession of communicative language. Throughout his paper - a paper that relies heavily on the detailed investigation of language performance in individual brain-damaged patients - Allport rigorously distinguishes the understanding of words, in written and spoken forms, from the understanding of the conceptual representation or non-linguistic cognitive code on to which words are mapped. Thus, one patient, AL, may fail on occasion to distinguish the words *tail* and *snout*, *Wall* and *faucet*, *boat* and *shoe*. But this loss of meaning differences Allport shows in no way implies that the cognitive code, or mental structures, representing these word meanings have been similarly impaired. What emerges from this subtle and

empirically well-supported paper is a view of the brain as a loose confederation of specific and restricted capacities, any of which may be independently impaired. On this view the capacity to understand the utterances of natural language rests on an ability to represent and manipulate objects, relations and actions in terms of a cognitive symbol system that is itself independent of language. For Allport language is epiphenomenal on these non-linguistic, mode-specific cognitive codes. The aphasic problems - and ours - are in the mopping.

In his conclusion Allport wisely adds a caveat. The paper has concentrated solely on individual language-users. While any such individual, the fundamental cognitive processes are computed in a medium other than natural language. But, he adds, across individuals natural language is obviously the principal medium of communication. So in a closing Lurialike spirit he acknowledges the profoundly social character of cognitive development.

A paper firmly rooted in the social basis of cognition is Jerome Bruner's "The Social Context of Language Acquisition". Bruner's cogently argued thesis is that the acquisition of language depends upon the earlier acquisition of what he calls, complementing Chomsky's "Language Acquisition Device" (LAD), a LASS or Language Assistance System. For Bruner, the LAD is epiphenomenal on the LASS. The dark and difficult problems are uncovering the relations between the two. But as a start at least, Bruner recognizes that linguistic knowledge is not separable from the learning of concepts about the physical world and is certainly not acquired before learning about how to communicate.

Finally, in a dense, guarded and difficult paper, "Language and Truth", Michael Dummett initially appears to be taking what has become a traditional philosopher's stance, that language is in essence an instrument for the expression of propositional thought and that propositions are either true or false. It is only as the paper proceeds that it becomes clearer that he is expressing serious reservations about a theory of meaning for a natural language that relies exclusively on an appeal to truth-conditions. The grounds for his reservations lie partly in a distinction Dummett elaborates between a semantic theory for a formal language and a theory of meaning for a natural language. In the first case the task of the semantic theorist is immeasurably simplified by his being able to stipulate the intended interpretation of the notations of the formal language. Actual language-users, however, understand a sentence or, if linguist would add, a clause, a phrase, a word, a fragment of language, because they are able to make a tacit, unstipulated, connection between the meaning of the sentence and the conditions believed to determine its truth. A theorist of meaning for a natural language, Dummett cautiously insists, cannot leave this connection tacit; he must spell it out. In attempting to grapple with the difficult problem of doing so, Dummett, appealing to "the practice of speaking the language", argues for a theory of meaning that does not stop at establishing truth and making correct deductive and inductive inferences but takes on board the consequences of understanding: what the individual does, acting on what he knows. In this respect Dummett's paper too appears to be viewing meaning as, in part epiphenomenal on non-linguistic behaviour.

Given the far-reaching importance of the question of the autonomy of linguistics, it is considerably weakened the impact of *Approaches to Language* that it is only subterraneously present in a few papers. The book cannot be properly recommended as an exploration of this theme, although some chapters are indirectly relevant to it.

Cambridge University Press have recently published *Semantics: A Comprehensive Introduction* by James R. Hurford and Brendan Heselwood (291pp; £6.95; 0 521 28949 3). The book is intended to present a "standard" and "authoritative" review of modern linguistics for use by first-year undergraduates.

The path to peace

Dervla Murphy

LEE SIEGEL

Fires of Love: Waters of Peace: Passion and renunciation in Indian Culture 122pp. University of Hawaii Press. £12.50. 0 8248 0828 2

Max Müller used the word "kathenotheism" to describe all Indian religion. By that he meant the choosing by a certain set of a certain god to play the supreme role on a certain occasion. In much the same spirit, Leo Siegel has chosen Sankara the saintly philosopher and Amara the court poet to reveal the simple-subtle tranquillity attainable when the opposed ideals of love and renunciation are reconciled.

Professor Siegel has only one weakness: a deplorable addition (no doubt acquired since he migrated from Oxford to Hawaii) to such words as "sacralize", "interiorize" and "strategize". Yet this is no earnest, jargon-laden thesis, as one might fear on seeing the sub-title. Lee Siegel juggles the hoops of myth and legend, image and theory with an entertaining dexterity rare enough among Sanskrit scholars. And, having been infected by Siegel's enjoyment of the game, one is not disposed to cavil when he occasionally ignores obvious, humdrum explanations for the sake of an apt analogy requiring some more ethereal interpretation.

Exactly who and when were Sankara and Amara? Sankara is venerated as a religious reformer, a spiritual leader who guides his followers through the tickle world of the senses towards an absolute peace - *brahman*. He may have been born in Kerala, into the priestly Nambudiri caste. And Amara, the poet, may have been a professional scholar in the service of a king; or he may have been a king himself. Possibly he lived in the sixth century of our era - or the seventh or eighth. Perhaps he was a contemporary of Sankara, as legend suggests, or perhaps not.

To Western minds, this temporal vagueness can be disconcerting. Sometimes it tempts newcomers to undervalue such characters because they are not precisely placed in a comprehensible chronology. But this is to miss the point that in India, even today, the concept of cyclical time remains more influential than our vision of history as a climactic process within man's control. Much of India's post-Independence unrest has been provoked by the conflict between these

mutually exclusive views of history. When Time is to be escaped from, rather than worked within, a state modelled on the Western democracies cannot expect to avoid trouble. As Mircea Eliade has put it, "Prophane time must be abolished, at least symbolically, so that man forgets his 'historical situation'". Hence that vigorous, the Indians successfully "forget" everyone's "historical situation", until we introduced the kind of historical interests and methods familiar to the West since Herodotus.

Fires of Love: Waters of Peace indirectly reminds us that this cyclical time concept, on which Hindu metaphysical thought is based, explains the invulnerability of Indian culture (forever assimilating the invaders' influences, yet never essentially changing) - which in turn explains the familiarity, to modern minds, of the world of Sankara and Amara. Reading our own Anglo-Saxon poem, *The Battle of Brunanburh*, one is in alien territory; reading the *Amarasutoko* one is simply back in India.

In the poems attributed to Amara - the *Amarasutoko* - the force invoked is love: both the sentiment and the god. Siegel explains that Knyvo, the Sanskrit word for poetry, embraces "any work of prose or verse which is infused with a particular and conventionally delineated *rasa*, an esthetic mood, flavour, or sentiment." But many of these translations are too bold for this reviewer's taste. Consider these lines, describing the death of an indiscreet parrot much given to reproducing bedroom noises: "Ooooooh, ahhhh, ooooooh, alihhhh," thus did the parrot speak. Until a ruby earring was placed before its beak. "Polly wabba nice red seed?" so sweetly asked the wife; The jewel made Polly quiet, for it ended Polly's life!

Feminists may be depressed by this book, especially when they reflect that for most Hindu women sexual relationships remain today in the *Amarasutoko* mould. Yet at least the women (and men) of India were never subjected to those agonies of guilt

reader must come to his or her own conclusion about the quality of Siegel's translations from the *Amarasutoko*. According to Richard Gombrich, Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford (as quoted on the jacket), "His treatment of the Sanskrit poetry is both bold and sensitive. A delight to read." But many of these translations are too bold for this reviewer's taste. Consider these lines, describing the death of an indiscreet parrot much given to reproducing bedroom noises: "Ooooooh, ahhhh, ooooooh, alihhhh," thus did the parrot speak. Until a ruby earring was placed before its beak. "Polly wabba nice red seed?" so sweetly asked the wife; The jewel made Polly quiet, for it ended Polly's life!

Feminists may be depressed by this book, especially when they reflect that for most Hindu women sexual relationships remain today in the *Amarasutoko* mould. Yet at least the women (and men) of India were never subjected to those agonies of guilt

inflicted on millions of Europeans over the centuries by Christian theologians. Among the cultivated Hindu *rasas* love has always been a cult, an institution, an aesthetic ideal, a Siegel explains. Within that tradition the *smayavasi* tradition looked at men's "love versus renunciation" tension, while women grew up regarding the enjoyment of sexuality as a refined art - and a duty as well as a pleasure. Meanwhile the *padayasi* were left to get on with procreation in their own crude way, without any "reconciliation of individual erotic impulses with collective erotic ideals", but also without any unusual inhibitions.

Fires of Love: Waters of Peace deserves to be read twice. At first it seems like a very large tapestry having small room; although one appreciates in detail, the overall significance is blurred and the creator's labour is too evident. A second reading allows us to see the tapestry in a suitable room where its beauties are more apparent than its flaws.

The place of liberation

Andrew Topsfield

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Benares: City of Light 427pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £14.95. 0 7100 9430 2

Although few of its oldest buildings have survived the periodic destructions by Muslim rulers, the river-front at Benares, with its three miles of temples, shrines and stepped bathing ghats, still has a potent aura of antiquity. The daily ritual of prayer and bathing in the Ganges, which has continued for some three millennia, makes the ghats at dawn one of the most timelessly impressive of urban scenes. "Utterly wonderful is the rainbow-like edging of the water with thousands of bathers reflected in the river", wrote Edward Lear in 1873: "I find it one of the most startlingly radiant of places, full of bustle and ception. Of Benares, as shared by many British visitors who strolled along the river-front, usually like the modern tourist, from the safe distance of their boats. For when the 'bustle and movement' were viewed at close hand, incomprehension and even revulsion began. The lanes of the holy

city were and often are narrow, crowded and squalid, lined with countless wayside Shiva lingas and other shrines and frequented by ash-smeared ascetics or funeral parties bearing corpses to the riverside cremation ghats. Even the most sympathetic of Western visitors - such as Eric Newby in his *Slowly down the Ganges* (1966) - may feel themselves present at some momentous performance or ritual from which by birth and culture they are utterly excluded.

The difficulty is, as Diana Eck says in *Benares: City of Light*, seeing Benares (Benares, Varanasi) through Hindu eyes, as the divine Kashi, "the Luminous" or "City of Light", the abode of Shiva and the bestower of *moksha* (liberation from birth and death) on those who die there. But in her book she has probably given as illuminating an account of Benares as Kashi as any outsider can, combining scholarly method with unusual sympathetic imagination. Underlying its physical aspect, the city has an auspicious subtle form, described by Hindus in mythological terms and defined by the disposition of its temples and ghats: landmarked in a complex system of pilgrimages and festivals. Professor Eck's exposition of these

myths and patterns is based both on the Sanskrit *mokshayana* literature and on her close observation of the city's topography and customs and interviews with its priests and residents. Apart from its value to the specialist scholar, her book will be at least equally rewarding to the student or general reader wishing to understand what Hinduism is about. Her theme is the city as an epitome of Hindu civilization. In the course of her discussion of its temples, shrines, pools, roads and ghats, she guides the reader deftly through the major deities and their mythologies and the fundamental philosophical, cosmological and social tenets of the Hindus.

At many points we encounter the extravagant Brahminical arithmetic of sanctity. Benares, the supreme *tritha* (pilgrimage place: "crossing-place, ford"), embodies the powers of all the other *trithas* of India. Thus the arduous pilgrimage to Kedarnath in the Himalayas can be accomplished by visiting the Kedara temple at Kashi. Even seeing its spire arises the sins of seven lifetimes; worshipping there removes the sins of 10,000,000 lifetimes. Bathing once in the Ganges at Benares is as meritorious as bathing every day in the winter before dawn elsewhere. No special effort beyond performing the prescribed rites is

required: even sleep here is equivalent to a *toita* or *yaga* concentration elsewhere. It is not surprising that the mechanical reliance on Brahminical domination and customs and rituals by the low-born mystic poet ridiculed by the low-born mystic poet Kabir. He took himself off to die in impure Maghara, where according to the Brahmins reincarnation as an *ascetic* the best that can be expected.

Like Shiva himself, his *Shiva* encompasses the universal paradoxes of existence. It is at once the joyful "Forest of Bliss" of the early sages and the awesome "Great Cremation Ground". Life has always been going to Benares: its broadened silk and brassware, its literary, musical and social culture have long been famous. But even more it is a place to die in may come for that purpose alone. Yama, god of death, has no jurisdiction within the Panchavati zone surrounding the city (the modern campus of Benares Hindu University is unfortunately just outside it) and Shiva himself whispers the mantle of liberation to the dying person.

This book is attractively printed and illustrated with photographs and nineteenth-century views. One or two misprints and the omission of an illustration from the English edition are insignificant faults in an admirable and lucid work.

